The Relation Between Political and Aesthetical: Three Performance Studies of Thomas Ostermeier's Production *Ein Volksfeind*

Master's thesis in Ibsen Studies

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UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

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Summary

This thesis studies the production of *Ein Volksfeind* created in 2012 by Thomas Ostermeier in the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz in Berlin. A stage adaptation of Hernik Ibsen's *En folkefiende* made by Florian Borchmeyer presents an altered version of the play focused on contemporary western society with the overrule of market and consumer values replacing the values of truth and honesty. However, it is not the topic of the production that is at most interest, but its aesthetics. The speech of Doctor Stockmann is followed by the discussion with the spectators who are asked to reflect on the situation within the story line and compare it to their country's socio-political reality. The audience thereby finds itself between fiction and reality, between illusion and the need to act, between spectatorship and participation.

Such in-between state, or liminal state, to borrow the term often used in ritual and theatre studies, presents interesting examples of audience's behaviour in theatre. Having watched *Ein Volksfeind* in three cities, Berlin, Oslo, and Moscow, I am comparing my three experiences in order to illustrate the variety of receptions within the same production and suggest possible explanations for it. Moreover, I believe that the question of spectatorship is closely linked to the discourse on political and aesthetical and can shed light on our understanding of the politics of performance.

In the Introduction to the thesis I present an overview on how the role of spectator in theatre and the notion of political theatre developed. In addition, this section introduces the method of performance analysis used in my thesis, based on the works of Christopher Balme and Erika Fischer-Lichte.

The next section contains production analysis of *Ein Volksfeind* and three performance analyses describing my experience as a spectator in Berlin, Oslo, and Moscow, with the use of phenomenological and semiotic approaches. ´

The discussion and comparison of the three performances is the subject of the last section. It describes the peculiarities of theatre event, which can be found in works of Max Herrmann and Erika Fischer-Lichte. Moreover, this section concerns itself with developing a tool for determining the politics of performance on the basis of Jacques Rancière's theory of political and aesthetical and Gareth White's method of studying participatory theatre.

This research is intended to be a useful resource for anyone interested in the special nature of performance and ways of analysing it, as well as those concerned with the question of politics and its relation to arts and aesthetics.

Foreword

This thesis is the culmination of two years spent under the roof of the Center for Ibsen Studies in the University of Oslo. This time has been a challenging adventure of getting to know Norway, Oslo, and of course Henrik Ibsen. The road to acquiring this knowledge has not always been easy, but both its ups and downs turned it into an unforgettable experience and enriched my understanding of the world around us.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the Center for Ibsen Studies and people working there, who supported my numerous and often overly enthusiastic ideas more than I ever expected. Especially, I would like to thank my supervisors, professor Jon Nygaard and professor Frode Helland. Thank you so much for all your long guiding emails, rich comments, precious advice and inspiring discussions. Thank you for believing in me more than I did in myself.

Additionally, I would like to thank the collective of the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz and in particular Frau Leila Frieling for helping me collect essential information for my thesis.

I would like to warmly thank my family and friends who gave me strength and motivation first to start this exciting process and then to bring it to a decent ending.

Last but not least, my special gratitude to Henrik Ibsen, whose role in my journey can never be emphasized enough.

Alina Aleshchenko

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introducing concepts: "politicization" and "repoliticization"

Back in 2000 when taking over the leadership of the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz in Berlin Thomas Ostermeier wrote in a short document titled *Der Auftrag* (The mission):

> Das Theater kann der Ort einer Bewußtwerdung und damit eine Repolitisierung sein. Dafür brauchen wir ein im besten Sinne zeitgenössisches Theater, das versucht, von den individuell-existentiellen und gesellschaftlich-ökonomischen Konflikten des Menschen in dieser Welt erzählen."[1] (2000, 12)

The concept of *Repolitisierung*, directly translated as "repoliticization," presents an interesting challenge for the western theatre in the 21st century, precisely because of the "re-" prefix. According to *Oxford English Dictionary,* this prefix stems from the Latin *re-* generating a variety of meanings, the most frequent of which are "back to or towards the starting point" and "again, anew."[2] Therefore, what Ostermeier urges theatre makers to do is not to *start* viewing theatre as a place of politicization, but to *return* it to this condition.

However, it seems logical that to understand the concept of "repoliticization" it is first and foremost important to accurately define "politicization." Again, according to *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "to politicize" has two general meanings: "to engage in or talk about politics" and "to make political, esp. to make (a person, group, etc.) politically aware or politically active."[3] In turn, the word "political" describes something that is concerned with government and state, power, and status, to which *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* adds a definition of "politics" as "ritualized decision-making."[4]

The way we exploit these terms in everyday life goes beyond the given definitions. We often throw such phrases as "it's all just about politics," without really defining which meaning of "politics" we imply. When it comes to art, the situation seems to be even more

[1] "Theatre can be a place of awareness and thereby repoliticization. For this we need a contemporary theatre in its best sense that tries to tell about individual-existential and socio-economical conflicts of the people in this world." Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German are my own.
[2] *Oxford English Dictionary,* s.v. "re-," accessed April 15, 2015, http://www.oed.com
[3] Ibid, s.v. "politicize," accessed April 15, 2015.
[4] *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4 ed.), s.v. "politics," accessed April 15, 2015, http://www.oxfordreference.com/

ambiguous: the lack of generally accepted and clear definition of "politics" makes it hard to come to an agreement on whether a certain artwork or theatre event can be described as "political." Not only the general audience, but even the theatre makers themselves share the same confusion on the matter. An example that illustrates it well is a poll conducted in 2012 by a Russian theatre magazine among the leading Moscow directors. When asking them what political theatre is, the interviewer found out that the majority "is sure that any relevantly staged classical work automatically makes theatre political. In addition, most of them are certain that expressing a civil stand directly in the performance harms its aesthetics."[5] Moreover, as one of the respondents, director Kirill Serebrennikov, points out, "[i]n Russia we use the expression 'political theatre' to call any type of theatre that touches something besides moral and artistic abstractions. So any more-or-less concise performance immediately appears to be political" [6] (*Teatr.*, August 2012)

However, Russia is by no means the only place where the word "politics" and the term "political art" create confusion. In fact, the relation between art and politics is one of the key discourses of the 20th century, involving a wide range of contributors, from political philosophers to art practitioners. What makes this discussion flourish in the recent two centuries is the emergence of a whole variety of new art forms and movements. Some of them, like Cubism and Formalism, lead to the creation of abstract, nonrepresentational works of art that have their roots in the idea of *l'art pour l'art* and the notion of looking *at* the picture and not through it, to use James Whistler's (2008) famous appeal. Others opposed to this idea by claiming that art can no longer remain autotelic and ought to have a social function, which, as Walter Benjamin argued, "begins to be based on another practice – politics" (2008, 224). In other words, the essence of the discourse on art and politics is to be found within the attempts to either discover the purpose of art, its function, meaning, and message, or, on the contrary, deprive art from the necessity to convey any message at all.

Theatre as an art form takes a special place in this discourse. Since the Ancient times has it been considered a space enacting a certain type of intensity and thus being potentially very influential and even dangerous. In book VI of *The Republic* Plato reflects on the nature

[5] "Большинство респондентов уверены, что любая актуально поставленная классика автоматически делает театр политическим. При этом почти все убеждены, что гражданская позиция, прямо заявленная в спектакле, идет во вред эстетике." As Russian language is not a generally understandable one, I provide the original phrases in the footnotes and translation of them in the text. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Russian are my own.

[6] "…у нас в России политическим театром называются все виды театра, затрагивающего что-то помимо нравственно-художественных абстракций. То есть мало-мальски конкретный спектакль сразу оказывается политическим."

of "great crimes and the spirit of pure evil" and dwells upon how certain public places are dangerous for making young people carried away with "the overwhelming flood of popular opinion," whenever citizens gather together "at an assembly, or in a court of law, *or a theatre*, or a camp, or in any other popular resort…" (2002, 352, emphasis mine). During the Medieval times the Church has been trying to regularize certain forms of drama, such as mystère and miracle, constantly attacking the other practices popular among the audience.[7] In the 18th century the same concerns were expressed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who wrote the following in the Letter to D'Alembert about the likely consequences of establishing a theatre in Geneva: "[o]ur altered morals [manners],[8] our changed tastes will not recover their health since they will be corrupted; even our pleasures, our innocent pleasures will have lost their charm; the theatre will have deprived us of our taste for them forever" (1960, 125).

The end of the nineteenth century enriched theatre practice with the notion of *auteur*, who was called upon to combine all elements of a performance in one symphony and subject it to his own vision. The emergence of director caused the flourish of various theatre systems, each of which was exercising various acting techniques, the role of spectator, and, above all, the function of theatre as an art form. The majority of theatre makers believed that theatre is to go beyond itself and challenge the existing reality, transmit a social or political message. The attacks on theatre shifted to the battle between different theatre systems and directors' practices. The socio-political contest of the twentieth-century western world imposed on theatre such functions as ideological, propagandistic or, on the contrary, highly critical of the existing power regime. The beginning of the century highlighted the emergence of artists who were highly concerned with combining theatre and politics: from Vsevolod Meyerhold and Russian revolutionary theatre to Bertold Brecht and Erwin Piscator. The latter, for instance, writes:

> Das Theater muß zum Instrument unseres Willens nach neuer Gemeinschaft werden! Es muß sich bewußt in den Dienst der sozialen und politischen Ideen stellen, die eine Umgestaltung der heutigen Verhältnisse wollen. Wir brauchen eine Bühne, die

[7] For a discussion on Medieval theatre and the Church see, for instance: Richard Beadle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Ronald Vince, *Ancient and Medieval Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood press, 1984).
[8] The original expression used by Rousseau is *moeurs*, which *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* defines both as natural or acquired behavior patterns and as the way of living, the inclinations, and customs of every nation. See *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française,* s.v. " *moeurs*," accessed March 30, 2015, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k50410d/f221.image. As explained in *Translator's Notes* to The Free Press's edition of Rousseau (1960), the equivalent "*morals-manners* has been chosen to keep the reader aware of Rousseau's constant attention to the real practices of men in evaluating their moral worth" (149).

> eindeutig und nachdrücklich dem Willen, der in uns lebendig ist, künstlerischen Ausdruck verleiht.[9] (Piscator 1986, 112)

Piscator, urging for the need of *die Revolutionierung des Theaters* (Revolutionizing theatre), was the first one to coin in the term *das politische Theater* (political theatre). It soon began, however, to be used independently from his theory, often with the reference to it, but as a wider term describing various theatre practices. The concept of political theatre was widely discussed not only among practitioners, but also among philosophers and theatre scholars. Most of their ideas can be combined in three general categories.

The first view supports the idea that all theatre is by its nature inevitably political. In her work *The Human Condition* Hannah Arendt divides all human activities into three groups: labor, work, and action; the latter being "the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality," which in turn makes it "the *conditio per quam* of all political life" (1958, 7). Arendt then argues that the origin of the word "drama" stems from the Greek verb *dran*, "to act," which therefore makes theatre, or play-acting, pure action or, more precisely, "the imitation of acting." Given the word's etymology and the idea that theatre is "the only art whose sole subject is man in his relationship to others," Arendt calls theatre "political art *par excellence*" (187). This view is rather eagerly supported by many theatre and art practitioners, especially those of them who see theatre not as much a source of aesthetic pleasure, but rather as a tool of initiating a social change. One of the most well-know examples supporting Arendt's point of view would be Augusto Boal, who claimed that "all theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them" (2000, ix). The critique of this notion, coming primarily from theoreticians and scholars, focuses on the seeming misunderstanding and thus misuse of the word "politics." For instance, even if we adopt the most common use of "politics" as something related to governmental affairs or exercise of power, it seems quite easy to find those human activities that have nothing to do with it. Or, as Jean-Luc Nancy argued, "[b]y definition, politics no longer reabsorbs into itself all the other spaces of existence," including art, religion, science, ethics, etc. (2002, 20).

If we therefore assume that not every work of art is political, our next step would be finding distinguishing factors that help us define whether a certain theatre practice is political

[9] "Theater must become an instrument of our will towards a new community! It must consciously position itself at the service of social and political ideas that crave for the transformation of present conditions. We need a stage that would grant clear and emphatic artistic expression to the will living within us."

or not. With regard to it, two major polemical perspectives on theatre should be considered, the American tradition of performance studies and the German tradition of *Theaterwissenschaft*. As Marvin Carlson argues, the American performance theory has developed in close connection to social science and anthropology and therefore "has in general looked for the utility of performance in its ability to alter or at least alter the spectator's thinking about general and specific social situation" (2008, 6). The mainstream theatre itself plays a relatively minor role in the USA; instead their more "pragmatic" approach to theatre is best illustrated with the flourish of a number of alternative theatre practices that can be united under the umbrella term *applied theatre*. As can be concluded from its title, such practices involve *applying* theatre to a particular social situation, which, as Richard Schechner and James Thompson argue, "means that the social theatre worker enters a practical and a discursive space already full of psychological and/or sociological reference points" in order to challenge that space and initiate a positive social change (2004, 12). These practices, that "have historically been labeled with a number of diverse terms, such as grassroots theatre, social theatre, political theatre, radical theatre, and many other variations," differ greatly from the traditional mainstream theatre almost in all elements of their production and reception, including the means and the purpose of creation, the target audience, the place and purpose of performance, etc. (Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 6-7). Although applied theatre presents many interesting cases for research, investigating it is beyond the limits of this thesis.[10]

Another major distinguishing feature of American approach, to which Carlson (2008) points out, is its certain bias towards the textual analysis and the relationship between performance and dramatic text. Thus, if we turn to American tradition in order to clarify the concept of political theatre, we are likely to find its definition within the *topic* of production. Michael Kirby, a former editor of *The Drama Review*, states that "[t]heater is political if it is *concerned with* the state or *takes sides* in politics," because that is what the definition of the word "political" implies (1975, emphasis in original). In other words, it is the theme and the utility of theatre that drive the most attention among American scholars.

In contrast to it, the German field of *Theaterwissenschaft* concerns itself primarily with "what might be called the artistic tradition of theatre and performance art." The subject of the research is then neither the application of performance, nor its faithfulness to dramatic

[10] For a sustainable research on Applied Theatre see, for instance: Tim Prentki, Sheila Preston, eds., *The Applied Theatre Reader* (London: Routledge, 2008), Philip Taylor, *Applied Theatre: Creating Transformative Encounters in the Community* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), as well as works published in the *Applied Theatre Researcher* journal.

text, but rather the nature of theatre experience as a social event and "a process of embodied action" (Carlson 2008, 4). Therefore, the representatives of this approach, unlike their American colleagues, relate the performance's political aspect not to its topic, but to its aesthetics:

> […] the question of a political theatre changes radically under the conditions of contemporary information society. That politically oppressed people are shown on stage does not make theatre political. […] It is not through the direct thematization of the political that theatre becomes political but through the implicit substance and critical value of its *mode of representation*. (Lehmann 2006, 178, emphasis in original)

This idea is closely related to Jacques Rancière's notion of different regimes of art that define, among another things, art's political nature. As Joseph Tanke explains, a regime in Rancièrian sense is "a particular way of assigning meaning to the forms of sense created by artistic practices" (2011, 77). Rancière introduces three major regimes of art: the ethical regime, the representative regime (not to be confused with the regime of representation!) and the aesthetic regime. Unlike the two first regimes, the latter produces art that is "an autonomous form of life," created by artists committing "to do something on top of what they do – to create not only objects but a sensorium, a new partition of the perceptible" (Rancière 2010, 118, 122). To describe this regime Rancière exploits both Schiller's notion of "free beauty," in a sense of going beyond mere utility to "contribute to the enjoyment of a place of sociability," and Hegel's idea of "end of art," which states that "[w]hen art is no more than art, it vanishes" (121, 123).

1.2 Research question: relation between political and aesthetical

It is this complex and in a way paradoxical nature of the aesthetic regime of art that allows us to talk about the politics of aesthetics, or, as Rancière calls it, "metapolitics," which he defines as the "way of producing its own politics" and "re-configuring art as a political issue or asserting itself as true politics" (2010, 119). Rancière therefore uses the word "aesthetics" in a sense of a certain mode of representation, and, similarly to Lehmann, relates it to the politicization of theatre. Another important point that he makes is that:

> […] art and politics do not constitute two permanent, separate realities whereby the issue is to know whether or not they ought to be set in relation. They are two forms of

> distribution of the sensible, both of which are dependent on a specific regime of identification. There are not always occurrences of politics, although there always exist forms of power. Similarly, there are not always occurrences of art, although there are always forms of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, theatre and dance. (Rancière 2009, 25-26)

The same idea is supported by Erika Fischer-Lichte when she states that contemporary theatre makers create situations that are simultaneously aesthetic and political. "To separate or oppose the aesthetic from the political became entirely impossible" (Fischer-Lichte 2008c, 171). The problem that we therefore ought to address is not the opposition between politics and aesthetics and the attempts to figure out whether a certain theatre experience is political *or* aesthetical. The question needs to be reformulated in such a way that allows us to research the *relation* between political and aesthetical. What defines the political aspect within the aesthetic experience of a theatre event? Does politicizing theatre mean addressing political and power issues or is it related to, using Rancière's term, the regime of the identification? And how can we apply theory to practice and examine concrete theatre performances? Moreover, is the transitory nature of theatre "contagious" in a way that it affect the political aspect, and the same production can be political in one instance and not political in another?

This thesis concerns itself with these questions. Just as Ostermeier urges to repoliticize theatre, this work suggests redefining political theatre. It will use Rancière's theory on political and aesthetical with its application to theatre. It is important to keep in mind, however, that, as Fischer-Lichte points out, prevalent aesthetic theories hardly address what she calls the performative turn in the arts – a process that started in the 1960s and can be characterized by the "dissolution of boundaries in the arts" and the change of the conditions of art production and reception, – because these theories "are unable to grasp its key aspect – the transformation from a work of art into an event" (2008c, 22-23). The same concern could be attributed to Rancière; even in his work on theatre audience, *The Emancipated Spectator* (2011), he holds a rather literary perspective on theatre events and their specific nature. I will therefore combine his theory with the works of Fischer-Lichte and Max Herrmann, both of whom not only represent the Theaterwissenschaft, but also base their theories on the notion of theatre as event and social experience.

In order to ensure that my research does not remain speculative, I will use a concrete theatre production as a case study. For this purpose I have chosen Ostermeier's *Ein Volksfeind*, which is his sixth production based on Ibsen's plays. It was created in 2012 and

has already been shown in 13 countries,[11] with the goal of raising "awareness" and questioning "the potential for transparency in a commercialized society".[12] There are several reasons for choosing this particular director and this particular work. First of all, Ostermeier occupies himself not only with theatre's aesthetic experience, but also with its social function. He sees theatre as "a sociological laboratory that examines the behavior of human beings" (Ostermeier 2010, 4). In December 1999 in an interview held by the *Theater Heute* magazine with the "new generation" of German directors, Ostermeier classified his work as exploring the style of "capitalistic realism," with the motto of "anything goes," as in suggesting that anything is aloud, including every opinion and interpretation. There he also defined the notion of political theatre, which for him is "… a depiction of the realities of the federal republic of the last twenty years" (quoted in Carlson 2009, 166). It can be therefore claimed that Ostermeier bridges the two approaches, the German and the American ones, by recognizing, on the one hand, the importance of *what* is being shown, and on the other - of *how* it is presented.

His production embraces both approaches as well. On the one hand, the topic of *Ein Volksfeind* can be called political (again, in the common use of the word as something related to power and authorities), because it examines such dichotomies as power and truth, money and democracy. At the same time, it poses the "Wie sollten wir eigentlich leben?"[13] question, which Ostermeier considers to be one of the main questions of contemporary theatre, a question that should be explored not only by means of play-acting and story-telling, but also by approaching the audience directly (Ostermeier et al. 2000). For instance, *Ein Volksfeind* contains a scene with the audience's discussion that resembles a process of elections (the spectators are asked to vote for or against Doctor Stockmann) and is later turned into a real political debate. The production therefore both exploits a political theme and includes an element of political discussion in its aesthetics.

Moreover, the discussion scene presents an interesting case of audience's participation in theatre. The topic of the discussion, resting upon Stockmann's criticism of consumer society and blind majority, appeals to almost every contemporary society, but is nevertheless grounded in the peculiarities of each country's social, economic and political situation. These peculiarities, together with a whole number of factors, such as theatre tradition and the willingness to publically express one's opinion, lead to different examples of spectators'

[11] Source: the Ibsen Stage database. https://ibsenstage.hf.uio.no
[12] See the description of the production on its web-page in the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz' official web-site. http://www.schaubuehne.de/en/produktionen/ein-volksfeind.html
[13] "How should we actually live?"

behavior, varying from rather passive and unwilling participation to shouting and accusing actors (or their characters) of being corrupted and manipulating the truth.

1.3 Methodology and main sources

I will therefore study not only the production itself, but also the three showings of it that I have been a part of, as a spectator, in Berlin, Oslo, and Moscow, and focus on the variable elements within them. Such analysis, however, suggests that the primary source of my research is the performance, the nature of which is characterized by ephemerality, *here-ness*, to adopt Carlson's (2013) term, and its dependence on the audience of the day. These features eliminate the possibility of exact replication and thereby complicate the analysis. In other words, no two showings of the same production are completely alike, and the researcher has no choice but to be influenced by the peculiarities of each performance. My primary source is therefore not even the performance, but rather my experience as a spectator, based on my phenomenological and semiological memories. Although it is not common to use one's own memory in a research, the only way to analyze a performance is to be a part of it and to experience it from the inside, as a member of the audience.

I thus have to briefly present myself as a source to prove my reliability in conducting such an analysis. My background is from theatre studies in Moscow Art Theatre School, which gives me the necessary knowledge of world theatre history to track the influences of famous theatre makers, for instance, Bertolt Brecht, on Ostermeier's productions. Moreover, as Linda Hutcheon points out, one of the crucial features of adaptation is its "context-dependenden[ce]". "An adaptation, like the work it adapts, is always framed in a context – a time and a place, a society and a culture; it does not exist in a vacuum" (Hutcheon 2013, 142) My understanding of the context of *Ein Volksfeind* is ensured not only by my knowledge of Western culture, but also by my personal experience of it. I have taken these three particular showings of the production, the ones in Berlin, Oslo, and Moscow, because I myself have been a part of the three societies their audiences represent. Being born in Moscow with Russian as my native language, I have worked on several international theatre festivals, including the one that showed *Ein Volksfeind* in 2014, which contributes to my knowledge of the festival's core audience and organizational peculiarities. Having moved to Norway and learned Norwegian, I have studied Ibsen's works and their adaptations in the Center for Ibsen Studies in the University of Oslo, where I have also gained a general understanding of Oslo

theatre culture. In addition, I have strong connections with several German theatres, including the Schaubühne, and speak the German language, which allows me to study the works of German theatre makers and scholars in original, and advantage that reveals nuances lost in the less precise English translation. The combination of these knowledge and competences ensures my experience of the three performances at on a rather equal level, as well as my ability to conduct a versatile analysis of each of them. The methodology used for this research is performance analysis. I will now give an overview of this method, including its vital characteristics and existing approaches, as well as a brief evaluation of alternative methods.

Thought the theatre itself dates back to ancient times, the field of theatre studies is only about a century old. Western scholar tradition has long considered drama to be a part of literature studies, devoting prime attention to text analysis. The establishment of a separate discipline of theatre studies and the shifting of focus to text realization on stage is associated with the works of two scholars, Max Herrmann (1865-1942) from Germany and Brander Matthews (1852-1929) from USA. As Carlson argues, both were pointing at the physical conditions of a performance, space and audience, and it is therefore "no exaggeration to say that the foundation of modern theatre studies was grounded upon a special reorientation – from the linear reading of drama to the three-dimensional staging of it" (2013, 18). Since then the field of theatre studies has been on the upswing, producing different theories on various aspects of a performance. New disciplines have emerged, including, for instance, the one of Performance studies, suggested by Richard Schechner (1976) for a broader interdisciplinary analysis, and the Theatre semiotics developed by Patrice Pavis (1982), Erika Fischer-Lichte (1983), and other scholars.

As stated earlier, German approach to theatre studies can be characterized by its emphasis on performance itself and on its distinguishing characteristics. Therefore, as Henry Bial puts it, "[w]hat makes performance studies unique is that it shares the characteristics of its object: performance. Just as performance is contingent, contested, hard to pin down, so too is its study" (2007, 1). Nevertheless, as Christopher Balme argues, variable elements of a performance seldom become an object of analysis. Instead, the focus often lies "on the more-or-less constant features of the production (set, costumes, performance space), whereas the variable aspects, such as changes in a specific actor's performance, are less frequently examined." Balme therefore makes a strict distinction between a production and a performance: while both are constructed with stage signs, the latter inherits high variability and is "the unique event witnessed," whereas a production is related to artistic structure or,

"in semiotic terms, to the arrangement of signs" (2008, 133). I will apply Balme's definition and from now on use the word "production" to refer to the constant elements combined by the joint efforts of the director, set-designer, actors, etc.; and the word "performance" to name each single realization of the production.

According to Balme's definition, the generally applied term "performance analysis" is thus quite misused, as it is de facto a production analysis that is being carried out. My research on Ostermeier's work, however, serves as an exception of this situation, as it focuses primarily on the audience's behavior within different showings of the same production. Nevertheless, without describing and investigating the production's constant features (i.e. conducting a production analysis, as Balme calls it) it would have been impossible to demonstrate the differences between various performances. Moreover, it is the high degree of consistence that makes "any kind of insubjective exchange between scholars possible" (Balme 2008, 134). My analysis will therefore combine the two approaches; firstly, I will look at the production itself using semiotic and phenomenological methods explained below, and then enlarge on the scene involving the audience and some other aspects within the three performances.

Another issue complicating performance analysis is its inherent subjectivity. From the perspective of semiotics studying a performance can be compared to making a translation, which Lawrence Venuti defines as "a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the foreign text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the translating language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation" (2008, 113). Sharing the aim of turning foreign signifiers (in this case, stage signs) into the ones understandable and accessible by the reader, a theatre researcher bases his analysis on an interpretation. However, "the translator's invisibility," described by Venuti as the key feature of a fluent translation, is hardly achievable (and, arguably, less desirable) in the field of theatre studies. After all (and this point should be highly emphasized) a researcher is as well just a member of the audience, perhaps more well-grounded, more versed in theatre history and analysis, but still a spectator observing the action on stage. No matter how realistic a production is, "it does not follow that each spectator will generate the same meaning about dramatic characters and their fictive world" (Fischer-Lichte 2014, 40). Subjectivity is in fact the inherent feature of every form of perception, be it looking at a painting or watching a film. Two people are likely to have different, sometimes even opposite, opinions on the work of art and its possible symbolic meaning; furthermore, the same person can have a completely different view on the same work over a period of time. What distinguishes a performance analysis, however, is its

almost complete reliance on the researcher's memory that not only records a limited number of things, but also "translates" them in an individual way, creating meaning based on individual associations and focal points. Even certain techniques that are used to help the researcher's memory cannot entirely eliminate its ability to remember and focus on one thing and sometimes completely neglect the other. Therefore, one should keep in mind that "[t]he unreliability of memory, like the subjectivity of perception, factors into the process of analysis" (Fischer-Lichte 2014, 50).

It should be noted, however, that there exists another method of studying a performance that might seem to be more objective, theatre historiography. This approach deals, by definition,[14] with events in the past, which does not necessarily imply looking at productions from the Elizabethan era. In fact, even yesterday's performance can be treated from the perspective of theatre historiography, on condition that it is has not been seen live. Such analysis therefore relies not on the production itself, but instead on secondary sources providing information about it, such as images, rehearsal memos, critiques, etc. (Fischer-Lichte 2014, 71). Although historiographic method relies on material documents instead of ephemeral performance, such analysis cannot nevertheless avoid many pitfalls relating to the preservation of the documents and their reliability.[15]

As the object of my research is three performances that I have attended personally, I chose the method of performance analysis over its alternative. In *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies* (2014) Fischer-Lichte suggests two main approaches to conduct it, phenomenological and semiotical. The first one exploits the spectator's experience and sensations, the use of light, sound, the energetic field between the auditorium and the stage, the reactions of other spectators; in other words, everything that we perceive during the performance. It "focuses on the interplay of appearance, perception, and experience" and aims to "comprehend a performance through personal and shared audience reactions" (Fischer-Lichte 2014, 55-56). When used on it's own, such approach is often criticized for being incomplete. For instance, Patrice Pavis criticizes phenomenology for the lack of "explanation of its analytical process". He goes even further to suggest that such approach should in fact be recognized "as unconscious, 'wild' semiology, concerned with reacting to

[14] *The Oxford Classical Dictionary (4 ed.),* s.v. "history," accessed February 06, 2015, http://www.oxfordreference.com/

[15] On the complication of using performance art materials, see, for instance, Kristy Davis, "Slipping thru the Cracks: Issues with Performing Arts Ephemera" (paper presented on World Library and Information Congress, Oslo, August 14th - 18th 2005).

the performance as a receiver who judges only what is perceived" without trying to distinguish between *Sinn* (sense) and *Bedeutung* (meaning) (Pavis 1980, 2).

The semiotical approach, suggested by Pavis as an alternative method, aims at creating meaning by looking at stage signs. Pavis exploits the general theory of semiotics, in particular Charles S. Peirce's typology of signs (icon, index, symbol) to classify different theatre signs. What is important for us in this analysis is the ability of theatrical signs to function as *Zeichen von Zeichen* (signs of signs) (Fischer-Lichte 1983, 181). For instance, any phrase that an actor says on stage signifies not only its direct meaning, but also denotes the phrase said by a fictional character that the actor portrays. Moreover, "this characterizing ability of the theatre signs to function as signs of sings results in their other distinguishing feature: their great mobility". It implies that one theatre sign can easily be replaced with another, even with the one belonging to a different category. In theatre rain is rarely portrayed with real drops falling down, but instead with the sound, the lights, or even with a comment on the weather made by a character (182). It is therefore important to not only look at familiar meaning of sings, but also generate their theatrical meaning. For instance, as I will show later in my analysis, music scenes in Ostermeier's production are also crucial signifiers of collaborative activity and can be read as a contrasting comment to the loneliness of the main character determined by the action of the play.

The semiotical approach has also acquired a number of critiques. For instance, as Bert O. States argues, the problem of semiotics lies in "its almost imperialistic confidence in its product: that is, its implicit belief that you have exhausted a thing's interest when you have explained how it works as a sign". The same way as Pavis criticized the phenomenological approach for not pursuing the creation the meaning, States attacked semiotics for addressing only the meaning and "dissect[ing] the perceptual impression theatre makes on the spectator" (1987, 7). According to Fischer-Lichte, a sustainable performance analysis should therefore combine both approaches and look at the way they interlace by analyzing which experience creates the certain kind of meaning and vice versa (2014, 58). I support this viewpoint and will use both approaches in my analysis. As its main focus lies in the discussion with the audience, I therefore cannot neglect my initial (phenomenological) reaction as spectator towards the behavior of other spectators and actors. However, without generating the (semiotical) meaning out of their words and actions, I would fail to investigate the factors conditioning this behavior. For instance, many of the things said during the performance were not merely arguments about the topic; they signified expectations that the spectators had about the theatre and the role of actors and spectators in it.

Since my analysis also deals with cultural differences and peculiarities, it is worth noting that the meaning of symbolic signs, the third type of signs in Pavis' classification, is "established by conventions and custom" (Balme 2008, 80). It can thus differ within cultures, which, in turn, can enrich the performance analysis with precious peculiarities. In case of *Ein Volksfeind*, a production that was most likely planned to be touring all over the world, there is also a special interest in noticing how the creators adapt to these cultural differences. For instance, while performing in Istanbul in 2014, the term "rabble" was translate with the very same expression "çapulcu" that the Turkish Prime Minister used a year before to insult the demonstrators in Gezi Park, which inevitably generated all range of meanings for that particular audience.[16]

Proceeding to practical tools of performance analysis, we should once again mention a gross issue that complicates it, the unreliability of researcher's memory. Unfortunately, none of the existing tools are able to completely eliminate the problem. However, combined, they make it possible to both describe the bigger picture related to the research question and use individual details as evidence. Making notes or memos to "track the affective potential of the performance(s), and to trace how one's perception and the interaction between audience and actors changed" (Fischer-Lichte 2014, 51). However, writing a memo *after* the performance appears to be far more effective than making it *during* the action, as the latter risks influencing the researcher's perception of the performance. In addition to notes, a researcher can consult video recordings of the production (if such exist) to help "concentrate on individual details" and specific moments that are possible to trace only by re-playing them multiple times (52). However, it should be highlighted that a video recording can only help remember the details, but not the atmosphere or energy of a particular performance, which limits its usage to analyzing a production, but not a particular performance.

My analysis of *Ein Volksfeind* exploits both tools. I have taken notes before the performance to record the atmosphere preceding the performance and possible audience's expectations, during the audience's discussion to note down the exact phrases used by the spectators, and after the performance to track the peculiarities of every performance and my perception of it. In order to support my memory and noted while completing a production analysis, I have used the video recording of the original version made in the Schaubühne (to which I refer as: Ostermeier 2012). The presented methodology will be exploited in the next section. At first I will provide the general description of the production, concentrating on its

[16] As mentioned by Ostermeier in an interview to *Qantara.de*, July 7, 2014. http://en.qantara.de/content/interview-with-thomas-ostermeier-an-enemy-of-the-people-in-istanbul

constant elements. The presentation of three performances will follow, focusing on such variable elements as the framing of the performance and the audience's behavior during the discussion scene.

The last section includes the comparative analysis of the three performances from the perspective of audience's participation. The relationship between performers and spectators and their interdependence is a unique trait that constitutes theatre experience and distinguishes it from other forms of art. As Fischer-Lichte states, involving the audience into the action of the play is one of the strategies used to draw attention to the uniqueness and liveness of performance event (2008c, 162). The nature of live performance becomes especially important to study in the current "age of mechanical reproduction," which has greatly transformed the reception of the works of art. Moreover, as Lehmann puts it, "[t]heater is no longer a mass medium," which is urgent to reflect on, since theatre is "especially dependent on the release of active energies of imagination, energies that are becoming weaker in a civilization of the primarily passive consumption of images and data" (2006, 16). Does it mean that theatre is losing its positions to other media, for instance, film and television? It would seem so. However, as Walter Benjamin claimed, "[e]ven the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (2008, II). The inherent characteristic of theatre as happening *here and now* is therefore essential to its nature and survival, which shows the relevance of its researches.

Moreover, the role of audience is an essential question in defining the political aspect of the performance. Rancière (2011) places the figure of spectator at the heart of the discussion on politics and aesthetics. Similarly, Lehmann argues that "[t]he politics of theatre is a politics of perception" (2006, 184). Both draw special attention to the figure of spectator, because it is through his or her perception and communication with the performers that the artistic goals and intentions, as well as the combined efforts of director, set designer, light and sound technicians, actors, and other creators, realize and show themselves. The idea of audience as a co-creator of the process is inherent in any theatre experience, however, it is most visible when the instances of participatory theatre are concerned. As Susan Kattwinkel points out in the Introduction to *Audience Participation,* participatory theatre is becoming an increasingly popular practice, because it seeks to "engage the spectator in message-making," to let the audience "speak the message as well as hear it" (2003, x). This is not to say that non-participatory theatre limits itself to entertainment or merely aesthetic pleasure, but rather to stress that the practice of involving the spectators into the action sets a more profound goal

than merely experimenting with theatre forms and conventions. It dwells upon the notion that theatre is not only a place of public gathering, where individual people sit in the same room and watch the same actions performed by others. Rather, theatre is "the arena where a living confrontation can take place," as Peter Brook called it (1995, 122). More and more contemporary theatre makers are exploiting existing strategies and inventing new ones in order to find ways of fully engaging the audience in the theatre process. The politicization of audience participation is thus an area that calls for future theorizing, not only due to its ambiguity, but also because of its relevance and relation to current theatrical trends.

2 *Ein Volksfeind*: Production and Performance(s) Analyses

2.1 Production analysis: *Ein Volksfeind* by Thomas Ostermeier (stage version by Florian Borchmeyer)

Born in 1968, Thomas Ostermeier is a representative of a new generation of German theater directors, including Michael Thalheimer, Stefan Pucher, and others, who had to build their aesthetics on the heritage and reputation of such masters as Peter Stein and Peter Zadek. By the time he joined the Shaubühne am Lehniner Platz as its resident director in 1999, he had already become a sort of enfant terrible the German theatre world eagerly welcomed. As Marvin Carlson puts it, "[n]o major theatre director in Germany today enjoyed so meteoric a rise as Ostermeier, but the times and circumstances worked strongly in his favor" (2009, 161). Ostermeier's experience as an artistic director of the Baracke, a youth-oriented theatre organized by Thomas Langhoff in the former rehearsal space of the Deutsches Theater, brought him recognition as a director who exploits psychological realism to reflect the dark reality of modern life. Moreover, he was responsible for bringing new names to the German theatre; such dramatists as Mark Ravenhill and Sarah Kane were at that time unknown in Germany, and Ostermeier "built his reputation largely on their introduction" (162).

As a director of the Schaubühne Ostermeier continued working with new dramatists: in the first season he staged works by Marius von Mayenburg and Jon Fosse. Notably, he was not the only one to join the theatre as its artistic leader; dramaturge Jens Hillje, with whom he has closely worked in the Baracke, followed him to the Schaubühne. Moreover, Ostermeier invited the uprising choreographer Sasha Waltz, who joined the Artistic Direction together with the co-founder of her theatre, entrepreneur Jochen Sandig. One of the first things these four leaders did in their new position was issue *Der Auftrag* (The mission), a one-page document manifesting the vision and aim of the renewed Schaubühne. They promised to establish a contemporary theatre that would function in the current socio-political situation, i.e. "in einer historischen Situation der vermeintlich extremen Freiheit des Einzelnen,

innerhalb eines Systems der völligen Unterwerfung unter die Gesetze des Marktes."[17] A theatre that would deal with both individual and social conflicts and ask the essential question: "Wie sollten wir eigentlich leben?"[18] (Ostermeier et al.).

In 2002 Ostermeier did his first production of Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House* (entitled *Nora*) that became a huge success, including the invitation to the Theatertreffen Festival in Berlin, and has in total toured in more than 20 countries[19]. Since then the director has staged 6 of Ibsen's plays, all of which have extensively toured around the world, which undoubtedly makes Ostermeier one of the most important and influential contributors to staging Ibsen's works.

En folkefiende is the latest Ibsen-play staged by Ostermeier for the time being. Together with dramaturge Florian Borchmeyer, he refreshed the language and the plot of the play to suit the realities and issues of our time. Here is what the director himself claims about the production:

> *Ein Volksfeind* behandelt modellhaft die Frage, welche Chance die Wahrheit in einer durchökonomisierten Gesellschaft hat und wie es die Ökonomie schafft, den Primat über Politik oder Vernunft zu bekommen.[20]

The spectators are confronted with this question the moment they enter the auditorium. The first and only thing they see as they take their seats is a screen serving both as a curtain marking the stage space and a shield for projecting an extract from the upcoming speech of Dr. Stockmann:

> "I AM WHAT I AM" – der Slogan eines amerikanischen Turnschuhherstellers ist also keine bloße Lüge, kein bloßer Werbefeldzug, sondern ein Militärfeldzug, ein Kriegsgeschrei, der sich gegen alles richtet, was zwischen den Wesen existiert, gegen alles, was unbestimmt zirkuliert, alles, was sie unsichtbar miteinander verbindet, alles, was sich der vollständigen Verwüstung entgegenstellt, gegen alles, was bewirkt, dass wir existieren und dass die Welt nicht überall wie eine Autobahn aussieht, wie ein Vergnügungspark oder ein Neubauviertel: pure Langeweile, leidenschaftslos und

[17] "…in a historical situation of putative extreme individual freedom within the system of the absolute subordination to the market laws." Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German are my own.
[18] "How should we actually live?"
[19] Source: ibsenstage.hf.uio.no
[20] "*An Enemy of the People* exemplary addresses the question, what chance the truth has in the throughout economized society and how the economy manages to obtain the primacy over politics and common sense." In a conversation with Heinz Bude. Published in the brochure to the season 2012/2013. http://www.schaubuehne.de/uploads/Heinz_Bude_Thomas_Ostermeier_Oekonomie_und_Wahrheit_Juni2012.pdf

> wohlgeordnet, eisiger leerer Raum, durch den nur noch registrierte Körper, automobile Moleküle und ideale Waren zirkulieren.[21] (Ostermeier 2012)

As the lights go down signalizing the beginning of the performance, we hear the sounds of a guitar. The letters on the screen become more transparent, yet still visible as we spot Billing (Moritz Gottwald) sitting at the table on the right side of the stage.

Music plays an extremely important role in Ostermeier's productions. It affects the spectators on a physical level, communicating the meaning directly to their senses. Moreover, the lyrics often anticipate the action and reveal its true nature. While we are still looking at the "I AM WHAT I AM" accusatory extract, Billing is singing Gnarls Barkley's "Crazy":

> But it wasn't because I didn't know enough
> *I just knew too much*
> Does that make me crazy
> May be I'm crazy
> May be I'm crazy
> Probably (Ostermeier 2012)

Shortly after appears Katharina (Eva Meckbach), who in Ostermeier's version also substitutes Petra by adopting some of her lines and functions. She joins Billing in singing the words that we all have heard many times, yet probably never have paid that much attention to them:

> Who do you think you are
> Ha ha ha, bless your soul
> *You really think you're in control* (Ostermeier 2012)

The theme of the song, with such phrases as the ones that I have highlighted, corresponds not only to the storyline, but, more importantly, to essential questions a production raises. Who do you have to be to confront the modern capitalistic society? What chances do you have in this battle? Is it enough to simply tell the truth or will everyone just "think that you're crazy"?

The words on the screen begin to fade away as Katharina interrupts Billing by asking him how much spaghetti he wants. The light changes and we can finally see the whole stage

[21] "I AM WHAT I AM" – the latest marketing slogan by an American sports shoe producer is not simply a lie, a simple advertising campaign, but a military campaign, a war cry directed against everything that exists between beings, against everything that circulates indistinctly, everything that invisibly links them, everything that prevents complete desolation, against everything that makes us exist and ensures that the whole world doesn't everywhere have the look and feel of a highway, an amusement park or a new town: pure boredom, passionless but well-ordered, empty, frozen space, where nothing moves apart from registered bodies, molecular automobiles, and ideal commodities (The Invisible Committee 2009, 20).

for the first time. The set design by Jan Pappelbaum depicts a spacious room with artistic interior, most of which is drawn in chalk on the black wall panels. The only tangible pieces of furniture on stage are a large table on the right and a black leather sofa next to a small coffee table on the left. The wall drawings, made by Katharina Ziemke, present everything else, be it a flat plan ("Children's room"), some strange schemes and formulas ("doctor↔patient") or the missing pieces of furniture (TV set, leisure chair). Things the Stockmanns do not yet possess are drawn on the walls as a visual illustration to their dreams and plans. The walls resemble both school slates covered up with brainstorming ideas and menu boards in cafes meant to contain information that can be easily altered. Everything in Stockmanns' flat is mutable and mobile; in the second scene it will be easily transformed into an editorial office to then be erased completely, just as the dreams and hopes of the young Stockmann couple.

The first tension is created when the doorbell rings. Expecting Hovstad, Katharina is taken aback to find Peter Stockmann (Ingo Hülsmann) coming in. The immediate contrast between him and the others is portrayed on several levels: he looks much older than them, he is wearing a costume, and his gestures are rather restrained. Moreover, the body placement on stage speaks distinctly about their attitude towards each other: while Billing and Hovstad (double cast: Andreas Schröders/Renato Schuch), who comes shortly after, are sitting at the table on the right, Peter Stockmann is standing on the left, emphasizing a huge distance that separates them. Only Katharina is moving back and forth in attempts to patch things up between Peter and his brother.

When Thomas (now permanently performed by Christoph Gawenda) finally appears on stage, he seems even more astonished by Peter's visit than Katharina was. However, he does not seem distant to him at all. Instead, Thomas approaches his brother for an awkward embrace and runs straight away to the kitchen to get a bottle of wine. These small details indicate what a rare and special occasion Peter's visit is. Another proof for it is Katharina showing him the baby. Peter, however, does not know what to say and asks only: "Schläft *es*?"[22] He still behaves rather restrained and distant. Keeping hands in his pocket, he asks Thomas about the article he is going to publish. They begin to argue, and Peter suddenly leaves with a short "good bye". This scene introduces the conflict between the two brothers, which is not a conflict over a single matter, but rather a complete divergence of views, values and lifestyles. Moreover, neither of them seems to be able to understand the other. As his

[22] "Is *it* sleaping?"

brother leaves, Thomas concludes: "Er trinkt nicht, er raucht nicht… Was hast du, mensch?"[23] (Ostermeier 2012).

Perhaps this is why Thomas does not even think about his brother when he gets the letter proving that the water is poisoned. He is simply bursting out with emotions about his discovery, as Hovstad and Billing persuade him to make it public. Katharina is the only one who seems concerned with the results of her husband's discovery. Moreover, she is offended that Thomas kept it all a secret. Anticipating a fight between the spouses, Billing initiates a rehearsal of their band, and the scene ends with all four characters getting together. Again, the song they perform ("Changes" by David Bowie) serves as a comment on the storyline:

> Ch-ch-ch-ch-*Changes*
> Turn and face the strain
> Ch-ch-Changes
> *Don't want to be a richer man*
> […]
> Time may change me
> But I can't trace time
> (Ostermeier 2012)

Figure 1: Moritz Gottwald (Billing), Eva Meckbach (Katharina), Christoph Gawenda (Thomas Stockmann), Andreas Schröders (Hovstad). Foto: Arno Declair. Used with the permission of the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz.

This scene (see Fig. 1) illustrates another role that music numbers play in Ostermeier's production. Performed by several characters together, they present a group activity uniting people and serving as somewhat of an opposition to the loneliness and alienation that arouses in the end of the play. As Alfred Schütz puts it, the process of making music together presents a kind of social relationship that allows the co-performers to "liv[e] through a vivid present together" and "experienc[e] this togetherness as a 'We'" (1951, 96) . Moreover, the fact that all music in the first scene is performed live contributes to creating the atmosphere

[23] "He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke… What's wrong with you, man?"

of a special event, a social and creative act that people have intentionally gathered for, opposed by its very nature to playing recorded music from a digital device. As the Editor-in-Chief of *Leonardo Music Journal*, Nicolas Collins, argues in the preface of its special edition on performance in the age of digital reproduction, "[i]t seems as though the isolation of ear-buds and the ephemerality of digital files have actually served to highlight the social significance and sweaty substantiality of live performance" (2008, 7). Although it might seem that the contrary is true and live performances are the ephemeral ones, Collins evidently implies that an impression of listening to digital files has a short life span, whereas attending live concerts linger long in one's memory due to the uniqueness of the experience. Indeed, an act of performing music live shares a lot of characteristics with a theatre performance, including, first and foremost, the exchange of energy between the participants and the sharing of the same time and space conditions, as well as the inability to reproduce or repeat entirely. As if to emphasize these peculiarities, the music scene gets interrupted first by Kathatrina complaining about her husband's behavior, then by the crying child. Although all characters get back together again, the song they are performing is quite different from the previous one. It is "These days," written by Jackson Browne in the 1960-s in a minor mood of reflecting on lost opportunities and regrets. Although it is still an act of performing live music together, it is the first time a theme of loneliness and melancholy is introduced in the performance. As the actors sing, the screen appears again with the "I AM WHAT I AM" extract on it.

The rather long exposition scene engages us into the world of the play, or the way Ostermeier and Borchmeyer converted it. They have turned middle-aged parents of three children into a relatively young couple that no longer resemble a family of an honorable doctor of a small Norwegian town, but rather someone you are likely to encounter in one of the bars in East Berlin. These characters struggle to deal with their new-born baby, work, record music, answer phone calls, and everything at once. They wear Converse, smoke, drink beer and shout David Bowie songs together with their friends, journalists in yellow jeans. At the same time, they are ambitious and critical of the society they live in with its extensive conspicuous consumption. In other words, they are members of today's new elite, a phenomenon which David Brooks wittily named *bobos*, a portmanteau word for the fusion of the *bo*hemian and *bo*urgeois social classes, a blending of their values and characteristics. This new image of Ibsen's characters relates to the main question this production – as well as most of the Schaubühne repertoire – raises: "How should we actually live?" and how should we balance between our needs to survive in this reality and our dreams to change it.

Figure 2: Moritz Gottwald (Billing), Thomas Bading (Morten Kiil), Christoph Gawenda (Hovstad), David Ruland (Aslaksen). Foto: Arno Declair. Used with the permission of the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz.

As Brooks puts it,

> […] the biggest tension [of bobos], to put it in the grandest terms, is between worldly success and inner virtue. How do you move ahead in life without letting ambition wither your soul? How do you accumulate the resources you need to do the things you want without becoming a slave to material things? (2000, 41)

Ostermeier's Dr. Stockmann is not a hero who wants to alone stand for the truth. He is just an ordinary young man rebelling every time someone tells him to play by the rules or hold his tongue. And that is why when Billing and Hovstad change sides they do not simply look as a venal press workers. Their sin is unforgivable: they used to be fellows in arms with Thomas, but they betrayed him. Notable, they will never do anything as a team ever again. Instead, the two journalists form a new alliance with Peter Stockmann and Aslaksen, and all four of them, joined by Morten Kiil, are painting over the walls of Stockmann's apartment, covering his drawings-dreams in white.

The act of painting over the walls (see Fig. 2) illustrates the meta-theatrical level added by Ostermeier to the production. Earlier in the action Hovstad draws an old-fashioned radio on one of the walls and Billing begins to perform a song, which is filtered to sound as a radio version. When Katharina wants to switch off the radio, she touches a "button" on the drawing. Billing, however, does not notice it and continues to sing, so she has to push him

out of the apartment. Similarly, when Katharina and Thomas are quarrelling, they do not notice that the stage is being prepared for the next scene. The others in turn take Thomas backstage as if he was a piece of furniture.

These meta-theatrical details, playing with theatre conventions and illusion, inevitably provoke laughter in the audience; however, there is more to them than simply satire. They bring in Brechtian elements, special techniques, such as *Verfremdungseffekt* (often translated as "estrangement effect")[24] and *gestus*, both aimed at developing a conscious attitude towards the action and the characters within the audience, as opposed to subconscious desire to simply identify with them (see Brecht 1963). The actors are therefore supposed not to embody, but rather to demonstrate the characters, sharing their own responses with the audience or, as the Schaubühne actors do, introducing comic elements in order to emphasize the act of performing. Moreover, as Brecht (1993) argues, this effect is supported by music which adds additional level in generating the meaning by commenting the action, a role that music in Ostermeier's production fully suffice.

The use of estranging techniques is not the only thing uniting Brecht and Ostermeier. As Loren Kruger argues, Brecht's pursuit of new art forms and techniques can be distinguished from the ones of either his allies (Bloch, Eisler, Benjamin) or opponents (Lukács) by his recognition of institutional and social, and not just formal, changes. Brecht insisted that "the transformation of society through theatre and other cultural practices requites the transformation of the institution of production and reception," hence the concern of the theory of *episch* theatre with establishing new relations between actors and spectator (Kruger 2004, 48).[25] In his *Kleines Organon für das Theater* Brecht describes *Theater des wissenschaftlichen Zeitalters* (a theatre of the scientific age) that aims primarily at giving *Vergnügung* (pleasure, amusement) of a special sort, the one that the scientific age demands. He states:

> Welches ist die produktive Haltung gegenüber der Natur und gegenüber der Gesellschaft, welche wir Kinder eines wissenschaftlichen Zeitalters in unserm Theater vergnüglich einnehmen wollen?

[24] Fredrich Jameson suggests preserving the term *V-effekt*, arguing that the common translation of it as "alienation effect," first suggested by John Willett, is misleading, because "the Marxian concept we identify as 'alienation' is, however, *Entfremdung* in German" (Jameson 1988, 85)

[25] Kruger insists on translating the term *episch* as "narrative," arguing that Brecht's theory was meant to be opposed "not only to melo- or overly dramatic, but also to 'epic' representation." Kruger therefore dismisses the most common translation of *episch* as "epic" for being "overly lofty" (2004, 27). I decided to keep the original German word, supposing that anyone acquainted with Brecht's theatre theory requires no translation of it, especially since the theoretician himself has later abandoned the term episch in favor of *dialektisches*.

Die Haltung ist eine kritische.[26] (Brecht 1993, 73)

Brecht therefore urges the theatre to generate a desire of critical thinking among the spectators, the need to question and evaluate reality, be it the one they live in or the one they see on stage. To do it, one needs to not see but experience, not watch but participate, as one learns and can be influenced only by performing oneself within a given pattern (see Brecht 1967, 1024).

This goal is also pursued in Ostermeier's *Ein Volksfeind*, especially during the scene with the public meeting, including, the speech of Thomas Stockmann and the discussion that follows it. The Act IV of Ibsen's *En folkefiende* opens with the citizens of entering "en stor gammeldags sal i skibskaptejn Horsters hus"[27] (Ibsen 1882, 653). In the Schaubühne version the scene starts already in the transition between the two acts, when the actors are cleaning up what used to serve as both Stockmann's apartment and the editorial office of "The People's Messenger" and covering over the inscriptions on the walls. They are doing it carelessly, not painting, but painting *over*, turning the space that used to be atmospheric into an empty faceless desert. Their work is accompanied by the song "The Guns of Brixton" recorded by Malte Beckenbach and Daniel Freitag. The lyrics of this composition, the first one in the performance that is not live performed, go:

His game is called *survival*
At the end of the harder they come
You know it means no mercy
They caught him with a gun (Ostermeier 2012)

The lyrics of the song with the constant repetition of "you can crush us, you can bruise us" affect our perception by putting us in a warlike spirit and presuppose the atmosphere of a battle field where the parties are determined to stand firm no matter the cost. Moreover, the history of the original song brings in the relevant context: it was made by the English band The Clash which formed in the end of 1970-s as part of the wave of British punk. The lyrics of their songs are often highly critical of existing social issues and have quite a strong left-wing perspective. "The Guns of Brixton" echoes the rebelling mood and social discontent that resulted a few years late in the Brixton riots.

[26] "What is the productive attitude towards nature and towards the society, what [attitude] will we, the children of the scientific age, be willing to perceive as amusing?
This attitude is the critical one."
[27] "…a large, old-fashioned room in the house of Captain Horster" (Ibsen 1960, 69). Unless otherwise noted, all translation from *Ein folkefiende* are provided from the English edition translated by James Walter McFarlane.

When the stage is cleaned up and the walls are painted white, Billing brings in a rostrum meant for Stockmann's speech. Yet just before others return to the stage he performs a brilliant beatboxing, welcomed with applauds and cheers from the audience. Beatboxing is a special technique of imitating the sound of drums and synthesizers with the performer's own voice that is usually associated with the hip-hop style of music. The sounds of beatboxing are rousing and energetic, lighting up the mood of the audience and bringing in a lively spirit of urban music.

The beatboxing is interrupted by the appearance of Katherine, who brings us back to the main plot line. Soon the other characters are on stage as well, and Thomas asks to switch the lights in the auditorium. This light transition signals to the spectators that they are about to take a new role, that something more than merely sitting and watching is expected from them. Although Thomas is trying to embark on his speech, he first gets interrupted by Peter. The latter addresses the audience directly and asks them to reflect about a number of things before making the final decision. "Wir leben nicht in normalen Zeiten," he says, "wir leben in Zeiten der Krise,"[28] and although it is easy to blame the authorities, we have to keep in mind that without them there will be no one to repair streets or build kindergartens for our children (Ostermeier 2012). With these words he leaves the stage to Thomas Stockman, who mounts the rostrum and delivers his speech.

The beginning of the speech follows the original text by Ibsen in claiming that "hele vort borgersamfund hviler på løgnens pestsvangre grund"[29] (Ibsen 1960, 665). It soon, however, develops into the extract from a genuine manifesto *The Coming Insurrection*, a part of which we have already seen on the screen in the very beginning. This work was written by an anonymous French group *Comité Invisible (The Invisible Committee)* in 2007, but first came to public attention in November 2008, following the arrest of nine people in the village of Tarnac in central France for alleged sabotage of railway lines, one of whom was also accused of being the author of the manifesto. The arrest provoked a wave of indignation both among activist, who organized the *Tarnac 9* campaign, and political and social theorists (Judith Butler, Jacques Rancière, and others), who supported it. An English translation of the book, published in August 2009, immediately became the subject of debate among radicals in both Europe and North America (Trott 2011, 117) . The pieces from the manifesto edited and put together by Ostermeier and Borchmeyer sound natural and ad-lib in Stockmann's mouth. They contain scathing criticism of capitalism, the reign of market and the ideology of

[28] "We live not in normal times, we live in the times of crisis."
[29] "…our civic community is built over a cesspool of lies" (Ibsen 1960, 93)

consumer society that together turn the world into "passionless but well-ordered empty, frozen space" (The Invisible Committee 2009, 20).

Why have the creators of the performance changed the original Ibsen text? One of the obvious answers would be that the text of the highly politicized French manifesto brings in the necessary socio-political context for further discussion. Moreover, since the speech is generally followed by approving applauds from the audience, we can assume that these thoughts reflect the thoughts of the majority of spectators. This explanation would have been sufficient, unless the second reason was suggested by the content of the brochure that the spectators can purchase before each performance.

The brochure is itself an interesting case for analysis, serving as somewhat of additional reading to the production in general and Stockmann's speech in particular. It contains not only extracts from the above mentioned books, *Bobos in Paradise* and *The Coming Insurrection*, but also other materials, including Ibsen's comment on *En folkefiende* and a brief overview by Michael Raab (2006) of using the play in support of the oppositional movement in several socio-historical contexts (Barcelona 1883, Moscow 1900). Another extract that the brochure contains is a rather controversial book entitled *Post-Democracy* and written by an English political scientist Colin Crouch, aiming to describe a new face in the development of contemporary socio-political situation. He argues that after the democratic movements that took part around the middle of the 20th century in Western Europe and North America, where "a certain social compromise was reached between capitalist business interests and working people," came an inevitable decline of democratic ideas and, consequently, the arrival of a what Crouch entitles *post-democracy* (2004, 7). He claims that the current situation in those countries that underwent the democratic movement is in fact hardly democratic anymore: "powerful minority interest have become far more active than the mass of ordinary people in making the political system work;" and "political elites have learned to manage and manipulate popular demands" (19). The same ideas are expressed in the manifesto by The Invisible Committee in a situation they call "democratic anesthesia" (2009, 69). According to Crouch, this phenomenon can be characterized by such as symptoms as "boredom, frustration and disillusion" (2004, 19). Again, compare this to the statement from *The Coming Insurrection*: "Sickness, fatigue, depression, can be seen as the individual symptoms of what needs to be cured. They contribute to the maintenance of the existing order, to my docile adjustment to idiotic norms, and to the modernization of my crutches" (The Invisible Committee 2009, 20).

Nevertheless, when it comes to the relation of Stockmann's speech to Ibsen's original text, it is worth paying attention to another text included in it, an extract from *Ibsen and Hitler* written by American scholar Steven F. Sage. It contains a sequence of lines from the original speech of Doctor Stockmann compared to the lines from Volume 1, chapter 3 of *Mein Kampf*. Sage not only argues that Hitler echoes Stockmann's points in several aspects, including the notion of aristocracy as a natural principle and the theme of the genius confronting a tyrannical majority (2006, 4). He goes as far as to suggest that Hitler drew his campaign of the Final Solution from Ibsen's character. The Act IV of *En folkfiende* contains Doctor Stockmann's urge to exterminate the community of liars, which echoes Hitler's claim to "exterminate untruth" (14). Sage understands that "[i]dentifying *An Enemy of the People* as Hitler's source text might be debatable," however, the combination with "the clear pentimenti from the same play in *Mein Kampf*" makes it rather evident that "Hitler had once again mentally donned the good doctor's white lab smock" (15). Although the strong claims made by Sage are indeed quite debatable, the original Ibsen's text does make a case of what would be today called a "politically inappropriate" speech. The ideas that should have been perceived as rather progressive and even romantic in Ibsen's times, would have hardy won the appreciation, let alone support, of today's audience. The difference between simply claiming that the majority is never right, as Ostermeier's Stockmann does in reply to Aslaksen's accusation, and calling masses "det råstof, som folket skal gøre folk af"[30] is rather huge (Ibsen 1882, 675). The parallel between the original Stockmann's speech and fascistic ideas can be drawn quite easily, which also explains why the creators of the performance decided to change it. The new speech attracts applause instead of condemnation, and although Aslaksen tries to point out that it is pure fascism to claim that the majority is the enemy of truth, the spectators remain in most cases on Stockmann's side.

There are slight but interesting alterations made by the creators of *Ein Volksfeind* to the extract from *The Coming Insurrection*. When Stockmann comes to the point that the family values are not as they used to be, Aslaksen interrupts him to say that may be in his family it is like this, but not in the families of others. This comment sounds bitter not only because of Thomas's relationship with his brother. In the scene preceding the speech, when "The People's Messenger" was still on the doctor's side, Katharina comes to the editor's office and ends up making out with Hovstad. This episode, however, gets no continuation in the plot; nevertheless, it somehow weakens the Stockmann's couple and makes Stockmann's

[30] "…a raw material from which a people is made" (Ibsen 1960, 99)

position lonelier, even though Katharina chooses him in the end. The other alteration is to be found in the very end of the speech. It is a little detail (that I mark with italics) that reminds us, however, of Ostermeier's self-commission to turn theatre into a place of re-policization and not just critical respresentation:

> Es ist inzwischen sogar eine verbreitete Strategie, diese Gesellschaft zu kritisieren – gerne auch im Theater – in der vergeblichen Hoffnung, diese Zivilisation zu retten.[31] (Ostermeier 2012)

After the speech is finished, Aslaksen takes over and argues that although Thomas's words might sound nice and even true, they provide no alternative to the existing system, they attack the system, "aber es geht nicht weiter"[32] (Ostermeier 2012). Aslaksen therefore suggests that those spectators who support Doctor Stockmann should raise their hands. Nearly everyone does so, which, however, is not an evidence of them truly relating to the speech, but more of an act that seems appropriate given the heroic image of the lonely pursuer of truth. The creators of the production, however, seem to be well aware of that difference. After the spectators put their hands down and is ready to continue watching the performance, Aslaksen invites them to back up their silent consent with Stockmann with an explanation. What follows is a discussion that depends fully on the audience of the day, which makes it impossible to reflect upon within the production analysis conducted here. Instead, the detailed review of this scene would be the subject of three performance analyses following this section.

The scene ends with Thomas Stockmann taking the microphone. In most cases he makes a natural transition from the improvisational discussion back to the rehearsed part by claiming that the authorities have power, but not truth. He continues to expose them until a limp of paint is thrown to the stage by Hovstad, who is standing among the audience. The limp is followed by more an more paints, that hit Doctor Stockmann and the rostrum behind which he s trying to hide. In the next moment everything is covered with yellow and grey paints, thrown from different sides by Hovstad and Billing. Stockmann tries to continue his speech, but his voice gets drowned in the noise and chaos. The scene end is marked again with the change of light and sound.

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[31] "At this juncture, any strictly social contestation that refuses to see that what we're faced with is not the crisis of a society but the extinction of a civilization becomes an accomplice in its perpetuation. It's even become a contemporary strategy to critique this society - *also gladly in theatre* - in the vain hope of saving this civilization" (The Invisible Committee 2009, 61; with my translation of the added part)

[32] "…but it does not go beyond it."

When Thomas finally stands up, he is in a state of shock (see Fig. 3). He turns round with an empty gaze as if he only now sees the remains of what used to be his apartment. During the next scenes he tries to wash off the paint, but the water is grey and leaves dirty spots all over. In fact, he is doing it more in emphatic manner and only in the presence of other characters. Covered in mud among his ruined "furniture," he makes it patently absurd to even consider that he was consciously involved in buying the baths' shares, as assumed by other characters. Here the action follows the storyline of the Ibsen's play: both Thomas and Katharina are dismissed from their jobs and lost all the perspectives for a bright future in this town. Again as written by Ibsen, on top of it all comes Morten Kiil (Thomas Bading), who has something sinister in his smile and the combination of cigarette in his left hand and the leash in his right hand, on which he leads an obedient German shepherd. He brings the bath shares he has bought for the Stockmann couple and leaves them with an option to question the contamination of water or simply kill the viruses that it contains, suggesting that everything can be killed using science. The next couple paying a visit is Hovstad and Aslaksen, looking for Stockmann's support with the newspaper given his new fortune from purchasing the shares. Thomas in turn pushes them out of his flat and empties the bucket with dirty water right on Aslaksen's face, who throws before leaving: "Ja. Das sind Sie, Doctor Stockmann"[33] (Ostermeier 2012).

Figure 3. Christoph Gawenda (Doctor Stockmann) after the discussion scene. Foto: Arno Declair. Used with the permission of the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz.

[33] "Yes. This is you, Doctor Stockmann."

The final scene of the performance, when Katharina and Thomas are left alone, is however rather ambiguous. The two characters are sitting at the dirty coffee table with a bottle of beer, as if silently asking each other what to do now. "Wie sollten wir eigentlich leben?"[34] – this question haunts the characters to the end. Thomas opens the folder with the baths' shares, and Katharina stares wide-eyed on the total sum written on the paper. The last moment of the production is worth paying attention to, as it has significantly changed within the performances.

In the first performance I have seen (Berlin, November 2013), as well as in the official video recording, Thomas Stockmann was performed by Stefan Stern. In the other performances he was played by Christoph Gawenda. What Stern's character did was to look at Katharina in the very end, and when she looked back, as if agreeing to something, the lights went out and the performance finished. Gawenda's Stockmann does not do it, and the performance finishes with the couple drinking beer simultaneously, looking at the shares. This little, but very significant detail of the first version made it easier to surmise that the mutual decision is being found, whereas the second version makes the ending far more ambiguous and unpredictable. Whether the eye contact between the characters was removed by Gawenda or Ostermeier, we are left guessing. The new finale, however, makes every spectator decide for himself, how much chances the truth has in the given circumstances. [35]

[34] "How should we actually live?"

2.2 Performance one: *Ein Volksfeind* in Berlin (Die Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz)

As I have already mentioned in the Methodology section, one should differ between stable elements that construct a production (or what I entitled "production analysis," following Balme (2008)) and variable elements that highlight the uniqueness of every single experience of watching a performance. I will now describe my experience during the performance I have seen in Berlin several times. Watching it for the first time in November, 2013, this was the very first impression I got about Ostermeier's *Ein Volksfeind*. Due to the absence of any notes on that showing I am using the notes that I have taken (partly during, but mostly after) the performance that I have watched specifically for the purpose of this analysis in Berlin in March 2015. Nevertheless, I decided to start with the Berlin performance and entitle it as "Evening one," since it is the memory of my first impressions that remains strong and influences all of my upcoming experiences of *Ein Volksfeind*.

The legend goes that one of the creators of the Moscow Art Theatre, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, once claimed that every theatre evening begins at the cloakroom, meaning that each element is important in contributing to the audience's experience. If we agree with the idea that the impression of the performance is complex and embraces not only what is going on stage, but also such factors as the venue, the atmosphere and even the foyer and the cloakroom, then that is also where we should embark on our overview of a theatre experience. However, the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz does not start with a cloakroom. Instead, it starts with the theatre café, which serves as a passage between the entrance to the building and the theatre part. Offering everything from wine to hotdogs, the café already puts you into the atmosphere of acceptance and comfort that is an important part of the deal between the Schaubühne and its audience. The café is generally full before the performance with people small talking over a coffee or looking through the Schaubühne newspapers lying around (see Fig. 4). The next thing you see as you pass through the café and get your ticket checked is a long spacious foyer with posters of and pictures from the performances. Moreover, the Schaubühne is indeed an "exit through the gift shop" place; just next to the entrance there is a sale booth offering marketing materials, such as playbills, posters, bags, etc., as well as the small stall belonging to Einar&Bert book store. There you can find not only general books on theatre craft or theatre magazines, but, most importantly, books relevant to today's performance. In case of *Ein Volksfeind* these are translations of Ibsen's

plays and scholarly works on the author, such as Steven F. Sage's *Ibsen and Hitler*, as well as topical books on contemporary political and economic system, ex. *Post-Democracy* by Colin Crouch and *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* by Thomas Piketty. If you are a curious spectator, you are likely to end up spending quite some time examining the stall or reading through the performance brochure. The ultimate result of it is again you being prepared for today's event; one can even argue that it is already a part of the event, because all you can think about before the performance even begins is Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People,* and the complex issues of contemporary society.

Figure 4. Cafe of the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz. Source: https://www.schaubuehne.de/de/seiten/cafe.html.

The performance begins with a slight delay and a sound of a mobile phone ringing – a tactful hint to switch off your phones. For me as a spectator who is already acquainted with the production, the first part of it, up to Stockmann's speech, goes without anything unexpected. During the speech itself the spectators begin to feel agitated; they are actively applauding to some claims, such as "Die Wirtschaft ist nicht in der Krise. Die Wirtschaft *ist* die Krise,"[36] and making sounds of approbation or astonishment (Aleshchenko March 3, 2015). To my surprise, however, not all of the spectators put their hands up in favour for the main character. And when Aslaksen wonders what makes a part of the spectators support Doctor Stockman,

[36] "The economy is not in crisis. The economy *is* the crisis."

someone promptly shouts: "Moralität."[37] Another spectator also contents himself with one word, "Wahrheit,"[38] to which Askaklsen replies in his usual manner: "Was ist die Wahrheit? Es gibt so viele Wahrheiten wie es Menschen gibt."[39] He then asks the spectators to suggest their solution to the problem, if they agree that there indeed is one. This remark provokes a splash of comments from all sides; notably, all of them are precisely on the topic in question. It seems that the Berlin audience are used to being treated as part of the action; some of them are performing the role of the citizens bona fide. An elderly woman next to me asks Aslaksen: "Wie kann man Sie abwählen?"[40] Aslaksen replies straight away: "Mich direkt können Sie nicht abwählen, dann müssen Sie..."[41] – he points to Peter Stockmann, who half-rises (Aleshchenko March 3, 2015). Both the actors and the spectators seem to genuinely enjoy the game they involved themselves into. Playing on the edge of reality and fiction, they bandy biting comments in such a manner that makes you lose a clear understanding of where you are, in a public meeting in the fictional city or in the auditorium of the Schaubühne.

At some point of the discussion Aslaksen coins in his favourite argument, accusing Stockmann of being against democracy and wanting to destroy it. A man with a heavy accent takes a word; having introduced himself as a native of Tel Aviv, he states that their "Demokratie ist eine Etnokratie"[42] and that there exists no truth in his motherland. "Die Wahrheit ist ungemütlich,"[43] he concludes, and Thomas Stockmann answers him with a short speech on the problem of the inconvenient truth in today's society and asks whether someone has a solution to it. Suddenly, he spots a young man trying to exit the auditorium and asks, whether he has an answer or prefers instead to leave. But the young man just shrugs his shoulders: "Ich hab' nicht zugehört."[44] This rather indifferent remark provokes laughter among the audience, but Stockmann fires up. He starts a flaming speech on how people today are deprived from independent thinking, "dumm gehalten durch die Medien,"[45] a speech that naturally develops into the one that has been rehearsed before and ends the improvisation part (Aleshchenko March 3, 2015). However, in this performance there was no clear border between these two parts, instead, it felt like an organic transgression and made the whole scene coherent within the frame of the action. This natural integration of the audience's

[37] "Morality"
[38] "Truth"
[39] "But what is the truth? There is as many truths as there are men."
[40] "How is it possible to remove you from your position?"
[41] "You cannot remove me from my position directly, then you have to..."
[42] "…democracy is ethnocracy"
[43] "The truth is unpleasant"
[44] "I didn't listen."
[45] "…kept stupid with the help of the media"

participation into the performance structure is what struck me so much already during the first performance I saw in Berlin back in 2013. It gave me an impression that the spectators *awaited* the moment of expressing their opinion, instead of being intimidated by it, as it was the case in two other performances. I suggest that it is to a great extent defined by the German cultural tradition and the place a theatre occupies in German society. As Carlson puts it, in Germany theatre is treated as "a major cultural form, knowledge of theatre is considered an important part of any cultured person's experience, and the stage is regarded as a significant contributor to the public discussion of social and cultural concerns" (2008, 5).

Although it must have not always been the case, Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008) argues that theatre experienced a somewhat "performative turn" in the 1960s, especially with regard to the relationship between actors and spectators. While the situation may be different for other cultures, it evidently is the case in German theatre. Firscher-Lichte gives the example of a performance based on Peter Handke's play *Publikumsbeschimpfung* (*Offending the Audience)* staged by Claus Peymann in the Theater am Turm in Frankfurt in 1996. The aim of it, she argues, was to "redefine theatre by redefining the relationship between actor and spectator" and shifting the focus from a representation of a fictive world to making something occur between the actors and the spectators. To facilitate this occurrence, the actors were addressing the members of the audience and even abusing them; a situation that reminds us of Aslaksen's actions during the discussion scene. Here is how Fischer-Lichte describes the situation that emerged during Peymann's performance:

> The audience, for their part, also responded actively […]. All participants seemed to agree that theatre was specifically process-oriented – through the actions of the actors, aimed at creating specific relations with the audience, and through the reactions of audience members, which endorsed the actors' proposed relationship, modified, or sought to undo it. To negotiate the relationship between stage and auditorium in order to constitute the reality of the theatre was of crucial importance." (2008c, 20-21)

Interestingly, while describing the performative turn, Fischer-Lichte mentions the Schaubühne as one of the first theatres that returned to the proscenium stage as their dominant model. She states: "To my best knowledge, the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz (inaugurated in 1980) marked the first of its kind and must be seen in the context of the performative turn of the 1960s" (Fischer-Lichte 2008c, 109). The theatre itself was thus initially built to suit the strategies that would be exploited by its future leaders.

The goal of establishing a specific relationship between the stage and the auditorium, the desire to make something happen *between* the participants (both actors and spectators)

was also the driving force in the Berlin performance of *Ein Volksfeind*. Even if they might not have realized it, the spectators and the actors seemed to have entered an unspoken agreement to exist together in the fictional space of the play and, thus, take seriously the issues that arise within it. This agreement was preserved even after the end of the discussion, when Gawenda-Stockmann set down with a beer and repeated in a state of shock: "Ich hab' nicht zugehört"[46] (Aleshchenko March 3, 2015). This repetition once again linked the real and the fictional spaces in the consciousness of the audience.

Even if there were spectators who were uncomfortable with the necessity to participate, their hope that the actors would stop the discussion remained in vain, as sometimes it even seemed that the performers lost all control of the situation. Similarly, the spectators who participated in the discussion had no intentions of stopping it. Fischer-Lichte points out that the situation when audience members are put into the circumstances they are not used to may result in the partition of the audience into two groups: spectators who transform into actors (or participants) and those who continue observing the actions of others, now not only of the actors, but also of the neighbouring audience members. This partition might arouse "contradictory emotions in the remaining spectators," such as shame for not interfering oneself, anger, irritation, etc. (Fischer-Lichte 2008c, 15).

Although I personally have not participated in the discussion and remained an observer, the participation of other spectators and the maintenance of fictional space both by the audience and the performance made me feel a part of it. Therefore, when the discussion was finally interrupted by a lump of paint thrown to the stage, the first thing that came to my mind is that someone from the audience did it. Since it is the case of one of the main Berlin theatres and not of, for instance, a street show or an experimental format, it is rather hard to believe that any member of the audience could have *really* thrown something at the actor. However, a similar reaction *within* the play seems quite possible, especially in the case of *Ein Volksfeind*, which indicates that my first thought stemmed from a particular experience of theatre space established that evening in the Schaubühne.

As I have shown in the very beginning of this section, the whole space of the Schaubühne contributes to creating this experience from the moment the spectators enter the building. Not only the traditional performance spaces, but even the foyer and the café that belong to the theatre should be considered as part of the evening. It has played its role in preparing the audience by creating the proper atmosphere; moreover, such things as theatre's

[46] "I didn't listen."

newspapers and programmes served as an additional source of information for those who were curious to explore the theatre's vision. Nevertheless, as the Berlin performance presents a case of an original production, it is important to keep in mind that a great part of the audience are most likely aware of the type of work Ostermeier does, which inevitably influences their expectations about the role and behaviour awaited from them. Let us now turn to the Oslo performance that took place in quite another space with another sort of audience to see how it differed from the one in Berlin.

2.3 Performance two: *Ein Volksfeind* in Oslo (The International Ibsen Festival)

My second experience of *Ein Volksfeind* was in September 2014. The guest performance was part of the International Ibsen Festival as one of its key events. The audience of the festival has already been well acquainted with Ostermeier's works; his *Nora* was shown on the festival in 2004, *Hedda Gabler* in 2006 and *John Gabriel Borkman* in 2010.[47] It therefore comes as no surprise that on the showing of his newest Ibsen production, *Ein Volksfeind*, the sumptuous hall of Nationaltheatret was filled with people. Dressed up for the occasion, a lot of spectators came rather early to enjoy wine, small talking and, most of all, the pre-performance discussion with Thomas Ostermeier. The discussion, however, turns out to more of a short presentation, as most of pre-performance talks are. However, the spectators seem to be content to having received a welcoming speech and enter the auditorium in a positive mood of anticipation.

Once again, the stage is hidden behind the "I AM WHAT I AM" screen, this time the text is in English. So are the subtitles, which appear as soon as Katharina starts to speak. Given the fact that most of Norwegians belonging to the middle or upper-middle class, constituting the main body of the International Ibsen Festival audience, have proficient skills in English, the choice of language is more than appropriate. Besides, as it became evident during the discussion, a good share of the spectators consisted of international guests.

The performance follows the usual pattern up to the audience participation scene. As Thomas Stockmann asks to switch on the lights in the auditorium, the spectators begin to nervously look around, wondering what to anticipate. Their anxiety is soon, however, lost in the speech of the main character that is welcomed rather enthusiastically. Some statements sound different for me in the Oslo context, particularly Stockmann's remark on a poor choice of venue. Indeed, after the industrial minimalistic style of the Schabühne, the atmosphere of Nationaltheatret seems to be too pompous and distancing (see Fig. 5).

[47] Source: ibsenstage.hf.uio.no

Figure 5. The auditorium of the Nationaltheatret, main stage. Source: visitnorway.com .

When Stockmann's speech is finished, Aslaksen takes over and switches to English to address the spectators. The change of language, as well as the use of subtitles, is a rather obvious necessity, yet worth paying attention to. Being nothing unusual for a guest production played in a foreign language, this detail, however, turned out to be rather crucial for this performance. The appearance (and disappearance) of subtitles provides a very sharp framing for the discussion scene. The illusion of a flow of action on stage that struck me so much during the Berlin performance was in Oslo inevitably lost. As Aslaksen switches to English, it becomes evident that the discussion is about to begin; similarly, the end of the discussion can no longer be perceived as a spontaneous reaction of Doctor Stockman, as the re-appearance of the subtitles marks the continuation of the rehearsed part of the performance.

As Aslaksen asks those favoring Thomas Stockman to raise their hands, a forest of hands shoots up. The discussion itself, however, turns out to be rather sluggish. Trying hard to make the spectators speak their mind out, Aslaksen urges: "But you *all* put your hands up in support of Doctor Stockmann, please, explain why!" (Aleshchenko September 14, 2014). To me these words sounded as an ironic remark towards the fact that there were almost no spectators who did not raise their hands up, and yet everyone seems to hesitate to begin the discussion. However, with the help of Aslaksen's attacks on the audience ("And you think his

decision is a solution?", "Did you hear what he said about the majority?"), the discussion kindles. Some spectators seem to go back on their decision to support Stockmann, instead they are calling him an anarchist and agreeing with Askaksen. Some spectators are trying to point out to the scientific background of Thomas Stockman that makes him more competent in matters of science. In turn, Aslaksen suggests inviting other scientists to hear their opinion on the matter. One of the spectator replies suspiciously: "But Doctor Stockman *is* a scientist! Isn't his opinion enough? You will invite your own scientists, who will say everything you want…" Aslaksen is quick to answer: "But I believe it is good that we are living in a society, where there are many scientists and not just the opinion of one person…" (Aleshchenko September 14, 2014). The overall mood of the discussion could be characterized as rather indifferent, or even hostile. No strong opinions are being voiced, and, moreover, no firm claims supporting Doctor Stockmann, regardless of Aslaksen's attempts to provoke the audience. Instead, quite likely as a defense to his provocations, the discussion takes another course. One of the spectators gets the microphone and points to Aslaksen: "But what do you know, you are just artists!" (Aleshchenko September 14, 2014). Not only Aslaksen, but other actors as well seem to be taken aback by this quite direct attempt to break the main unspoken rule of a theatre performance, a silent agreement made by the spectators and the performance to co-exist between fiction and reality.

The audience was evidently unprepared for being attacked from the stage. Moreover, by pointing out to the elements in Stockmann's speech that might be interpreted as antidemocratic or even fascistic, Aslaksen might have touched a sore spot. The spectators have suddenly found them accused with the characteristics that are fairly different from those that constitute their "Norwegianness," their self-identity as tolerant peace-makers. Had there be no precedent of questioning of this image in the recent history, Aslaksen's words might have fallen on deaf ears. However, as Mette Andersson pointed out, "[a]fter 22 July, the image of Norway as innocent and positively different in a broader European context was put under scrutiny" (2012, 419). The spectators might have therefore felt guilt or shame of behaving in a way that casted doubt on their reputation of good doers, combined with irritation that these doubts come from the guest actors whose "task" is to perform and not to accuse.

Nevertheless, the actors are not willing to give in so easily. Aslaksen (precisely as Aslaksen and not as David Ruland playing him) answers the attack with the resentment of a serious businessman: "I am not an artist. I am offended if you call me that." However, his indignation seems to have been in vain, for yet another spectator takes the microphone and

dilates on how astonishing it is to sit in the National Theatre of Oslo and discuss what Ibsen wrote a century ago. He states firmly that the reason the spectators support Thomas Stockman is because he is a strong character ("and we, Norwegians, want to have a hero"), an embodiment of Norway, standing alone against everyone. Surprisingly enough, none of the things he says are within the frame of the discussion suggested by Aslaksen. Quite the opposite, he continues to emphasize the fact that we are sitting in the Ibsen theatre and discussing the text that we all already know so well, because it was written by Ibsen himself and has not been changed ever since (Aleshchenko September 14, 2014). This comment interestingly reverses the history back to times where theatre was researched as a part of literature studies and the superiority of the original text was put under no question. Naturally, the authority of the text depends a lot on the figure of its creator. Although, a prevailing number of scholars claim that Ibsen was "Norwegian by coincidence," Ibsen remains an author who plays an extremely essential role in constructing Norwegian self-identity.[48] Thanks to him Norway can claim to be a society that gave birth to the father of modernism and an important figure in world's theatre and literature. We therefore have to keep in mind that the Oslo spectators *Ein Volksfeind* as a *foreign,* i.e. outside, attempt to interpret one of the canonic works of *their* playwright. Evident by the spectator's comment, it is thus regarded as somewhat a *mauvais ton* to speculate on the written canonic text, for instance, discuss what the authorities the city have to do with the polluted water. We already know what they will do – dismiss Doctor Stockmann and claim him "an enemy of the people;" we all have read the play.

Even though Aslaksen tries to bring the audience back to the topic of the performance by his witty comment "well, I don't know about this Ibsen," the theatre illusion is already broken. Instead, there is a nasty superficial feeling of playing the illusion (Aleshchenko September 14, 2014). To me it felt like being involved in a children's game and then interrupted by an adult pointing out that the horse is in fact just a stick and a sword is just a ruler. Except for that in this case it was not an "adult" or an outsider, but someone from within, involved in the same game, who pointed out to its imaginary nature.

Ironically enough, when Stein Winge initiated the International Ibsen festival in 1990, he claimed that one of its aims is "to tear down what he referred to as a stagnant Norwegian Ibsen tradition" and even "get some punches thrown from abroad" on how Ibsen can be

[48] For the overview of scholarly opinions on the matter, see Fulsås (2011). Fulsås himself, however, argues against it and provides agruments for the importance of Ibsen's origin in his article.

performed (quoted in Hyldig 2011, 22). His successors continued to pursue that goal and keep focus on innovative directing and fresh interpretations that would help deconstruct the existing conventions. However, as Keld Hyldig (2011) shows, "[t]here has been an established scepticism in Norway towards postmodern theatre and all that it entails, such as textual deconstruction, ironization and playful treatment of classical plays and traditions" (31). Seems that in the case of *Ein Volksfeind* the "punch" was too intolerable. Let us now turn to the Moscow performance and see whether the same situation have occurred there.

2.4 Performance three: *Ein Volksfeind* in Moscow (International Festival-School Territoria)

In Russia it became common that every grand premier or festival event involves distributing a great number of complimentary tickets and free passes among theatre elite, students of theatre universities and virtually anyone who happens to know the ushers. However, the queue in front of the window of the theatre administrator is even longer during the festival events, especially during the New European Theatre festival and the Festival-School Territoria. Sharing the same artistic director, a well-known Russian theatre critic Roman Dolzhanskiy, the two festivals share the same target audience. Cutting off less experienced general audience by their choice of radical experimental theatre, the leaders of the Territoria limit their spectators mainly to theatre practitioners and representatives of the *creative class*, a term coined by Richard Florida (2003) to describe people who are occupied with creative processes at work and cultural events in their leisure time. Notably, they mainly come to the last showing of a performance, counting on getting an easier free passage after the majority has already seen it. Although such event as *Ein Volksfeind* have naturally attracted a broader range of theatre-goers, the number of ticket-holders trying to elbow their way through to the entrance on October 6, was relatively small. It is worth highlighting to understand that the core of the audience that day consisted of "Doctor Stockmanns"; the very same *bobos* who found it easy to identify themselves with the main character.

Nevertheless, even for a festival event, the number of people that evening was extreme. Regardless of the facts that it was Monday evening, the show was announced to start quite late (20.00) and last for several hours, and the notification "not even standing room left" was placed everywhere outside the theatre entrance, as well as on the Facebook page of the artistic director of the festival. Therefore the first impression any audience member would get that evening was not of a grand event, but more of a marketplace or clearance sale at Gucci. On the one hand, it naturally created the feeling of stir and excitement, amplified by the bohemian atmosphere of the festival. On the other hand, when it became evident that the entrance to the auditorium is also hindered and that the beginning of the performance is thus delayed for half an hour, the general mood of the audience was quite aggressive and irritated, which makes the discussion scene even more striking. I will proceed directly to that scene, because the first part of the performance did not differ much from what has been described earlier in the production analysis. The performance was played in German with Russian

subtitles projected above the stage frame. The applause for Stockmann's speech was, perhaps, more frequent and enthusiastic than during the other performances I have seen, but not as much as to suspect any extraordinary reactions later.

As soon as the speech is finished, Aslaksen comes on stage and introduces the translator to facilitate the communication between the stage and the audience. The discussion starts quite rapidly as the man shouts from the balcony: "Stockmann is right!"[49] Aslaksen suggests that we should keep the discussion civilized and therefore articulate ideas and reasons in the microphone. The spectator´s answer ("Am I supposed to what… like shout from here?")[50] provokes laughter in the audience, as does Aslaksen's suggestion to come down, if he wants to (Aleshchenko October 6, 2014). The seemingly ordinary and perhaps a bit ironical suggestion serves in fact as a brilliant illustration to the distribution of roles and power common for western proscenium theatre and the acknowledgement of this distribution by both parties. The spectator seems to imply that a fair discussion ideally involves the equal position (here, quite literary) of the opponents, which itself is alien to this form of theatre. The answer is even more illustrative, due to its dual nature: as a character, Aslaksen has to invite the opponent down to the stage, so no one would accuse him of keeping the discussion unfair. As an actor playing him (David Ruland), however, realizes that the possibility of a spectator coming down to the stage is extremely low, as the tradition of the existing power distribution is very strong, especially in Russian theatre. This opinion seems to be shared by other members of the audience hence the laughter following the whole dialogue that would make perfect sense in a real-life situation, but is rather ironic in its meta-theatrical nature.

As the spectator continues to talk (remaining naturally in the balcony), an active discussion kindles, where Aslaksen´s role is eventually reduced to passing the word from one spectator to another. Phrases like "I have witnessed myself what the authorities do"[51] and "our rotten society is bogged down in this swamp"[52] provoke more and more comments and applauds from all sides of the auditorium. The spectators are filled with enthusiasm to argue with each other and even with the actors, claiming that German society is as rotten as the Russian one and the problems of economy Doctor Stockmann is talking about exist only in the western regime and not in the other parts of the world (Aleshchenko October 6, 2014). The lively and active discussion resembles the one that occurred in Berlin during the

[49] Стокманн прав!" Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Russian are my own.
[50] "Мне что отсюда что-ли кричать?"
[51] "Я сам видел, что делает власть!"
[52] "Наше вонючее общество тонет онэтом болоте!"

performance I saw and would have served as an easy transition to the continuation of the performance.

However, this usual transition is disrupted by one of the comments, or, more precisely, the reaction that followed. In the middle of the vivid discussion about the rotten society one of the spectators takes a microphone and points out that in fact everybody is defending the main character "because in his lonely fight Stockmann looks very romanticized"[53] and that the eternal problem of Russian society is that everyone raises hands in support, fewer speak up, but in the end Stockmann is standing alone and will be standing alone, and it is quite plain to everyone. No time is given to reflect on his bitter, but rather true words, because a woman from one of the first rows takes the microphone and abruptly suggests: "I ask everyone who supports the main character to go on stage!"[54] This idea, resembling the very first comment made by the spectator from the balcony, is again received quite ironically by Aslaksen who points out to the fact that he has already tried to invite someone to the stage, but no one wants to join (Aleshchenko October 6, 2014).

The pause lasts long enough to give rise to rather disappointing and even depressive thoughts that one of the spectators was right and no one would come to defend their opinion most likely using an obvious excuse that the stage is for the actors and the spectators are supposed to remain in the auditorium. Suddenly, to everybody´s surprise, and most of all to the one of the German actors´, people begin to stand up from their places and come up to the stage. Shortly after, less than half of the parterre remains seated; the rest is on stage, making all together around 300 people (see Fig. 6). Stockmann, feeling on top of the world, is sitting on the rostrum, and observing the spectators accusing Aslaksen of conceiving the truth and arguing with the spectators who remained in the auditorium. The atmosphere no longer resembles a theatre performance, instead it turned into a meeting, where the spectators from the auditorium are almost repeating Aslaksen's words in claiming that Doctor Stockmann is just one person and his words might be not the truth, but an act of provocation instead. The spectators standing on stage are, in turn, defending Stockmann's ideas as if they were their own; one famous theatre critic even asks Thomas why he tried to publish his article in the *People's Messenger* and not on Facebook.

[53] "…потому что тосвоей одиночной борьбе Стокманн выглядит очень романтично"

[54] "Прошу всех, кто поддерживает главного героя, выйти на сцену!"

Figure 6. The spectators standingo n stage during *Ein Volksfeind* in Moscow. Photo made by The New Times newspaper. http://www.newtimes.ru/articles/detail/88350/

Soon it becomes quite evident that no one is planning on leaving the stage, which puts the actors in a quite difficult position. All attempts to make the spectators abandon their position, including the threats that their position is rather dangerous, only strengthen their decision to stay. Thus Thomas Stockmann, or in this situation it seems more appropriate to refer to Christoph Gawenda playing him, takes the microphone and bluntly asks the audience: "Do you know that we have the 5th act as well? Do you want to see it or do you want to end the performance here?"[55] This rather inelegant solution, however, does not receive any response, but laughter. Gawenda therefore suggests voting who wants to see the last act. Everyone in the auditorium and a couple of people on stage vote for continuing, which relieved Gawenda immediately points put to: "I am sorry, but looks like the majority wants to continue."[56] Even though after that comment the spectators finally leave the stage, one of them can't help but disappointedly ask Doctor Stockmann: "Since when are you on the majority's side?"[57] (Aleshchenko October 6, 2014). This extremely interesting comment illustrates a rare situation when the spectators are the ones keeping the illusion, even when the actors have already broken it.

[55] "Вы знаете, что тонас еще есть 5 акт? Вы хотите его посмотреть или вы хотите закончить спектакль здесь?" (translated from German by the translator during the performance)

[56] "Извините, но похоже, что большинство – за продолжение."

[57] "А почему это Вы вдруг за большинство?"

The rest of the performance goes "as planned": Stockmann takes the word again; the others are throwing paint at his face; the fifth act continues according to Ibsen's, or more precisely, Ostermeier's scenario. But the mood in the audience is totally different to what it was before the discussion scene. Even though the end of the performance tries to show that Stockmann is alone in his defending the truth, the audience seems to not fall for it. And how could they indeed after proving themselves that he is not?..

The scene with the Moscow audience going up on stage appeared during the next days everywhere, from Youtube to theatre reviews. The general amazement of what have happened serves as another proof that this is not an expected behavior in Moscow theatre. It might seem, for instance, that a possible explanation lies in the specific characteristics of Moscow audience. However, such factors could have been considered determinative if the same situation occurred both evenings the performance was shown, which was not the case. Another possible explanation to that could be that the tradition of audience's participation or, more precisely, feedback to what is said on stage, was quite strong in the Russian theatre during the *perestroika* period, when even a specific genre of so-called *publicistic* (topical) theatre was established. One famous example would be the performance *Govori…* [*Speak…*] staged by Valerij Fokin in the Moscow Drama Theatre named after Ermolova in 1985. The creators were urging the audience to speak up, which often resulted in them seizing power and turning the performance into a demonstration. However, such tradition was almost completely lost in the new century and it is hard to come up with examples of similar audience behavior in Russian theatre today.

The situation that happened should be therefore explained within the special nature of theatrical experience that ensures a certain energy and power exchange between the stage and the audience. The next section will compare and discuss the three *Ein Volksfeind* performances in order to try to find out what there is in the theatre nature that allows such different relations between spectators and performers and which of these experiences, if any, can be called political with relation to their aesthetics.

3 Three showings of *Ein Volksfeind*: Discussion, Comparison, Politics

3.1 The nature of theatre event and *das theatralische Raumerlebnis*

The three evenings described in the previous section present three very different theatre experiences. To my own surprise, they turned out to have a complete unlike, even contradictory impact on me as a spectator. However, all of them are the showings of the same production. In none of the cases have the constant elements that were the subject of the production analysis been altered. Even the Moscow performance, where the behaviour of the audience could have lead to the performers changing the ending, remained faithful to the original storyline. Moreover, the theme of the production did not change, and even the topic of the discussion was similar in different countries. We can therefore conclude that it is not the topic, the plot, or the text adapted that plays the biggest role in a theatre experience. Instead, there is something in the nature of the experience itself that allows for various reception and contradictory examples of audience's behaviour.

To understand the peculiarities of a theatre event, let us turn to Max Herrmann. In 1930 he made a speech on the IV Congress for Aesthetics and Art Studies in Berlin where he argued that the essence of a theatre performance lies in the experience of transformation of space, and that "Bühnenkunst ist Raumkunst"[58] (2006, 501). Being one of the pioneers in establishing a field of German theatre studies, Herrmann initiated its separation from literature studies by drawing attention in a number of writings between 1910 and 1930 to the "the physical conditions of the performance, the spatial realization of [the] text" (Carlson 2013, 18). However, he emphasized that it is not demonstrating space that is the ultimate goal of theatre, but rather "die Vorführung menschlicher Bewegung *im* theatralischen Raum"[59] (Herrmann 2006, 502; emphasis in original).

To describe this theatre space Herrmann coined in the term *das theatralische Raumerlebnis* (the theatrical experience of space), which is "ein Erlebnis, bei dem der

[58] "The art of stage is the art of space." Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German are mine.
[59] "…the demonstration of men's movement in theatre space."

Bühnenraum in einen andersgearteten Raum verwandelt wird"[60] (2006, 502). It is important to draw attention, first, to the fact that Herrmann uses the word "event" to describe a performance, and second, to the thought that theatre comprises several spaces. To develop this idea, let us apply the "general taxonomy of spatial function" suggested by Gay McAuley in his book *Space in Performance* (1999). It is made to provide theatre researchers with precise shared terminology that would explain all the spaces forming both theatre in general and individual performance in particular. McAuley distinguishes five major areas of space, which are: "the social reality" (the building, rehearsal space, audience space, etc.), "the physical/fictional relationship" (stage space, presentational space, and fictional space), "location and fiction" (which consists of the subcategories explaining fictional space and its function), "textual space", and "thematic space" (1999, 24-25). All of these spaces, naturally to a different extent, influence our perception of the performance.

McAuley argues, that not only the spacial organization, but also the activities that precede the performance "are as much a part of theatre experience as the central activity of watching the play and may even be the dominant memory retained afterward" (1999, 26). This gives us the first possible parameter to compare the three evenings described in Section II, the framing of the performance, by which I mean the activities that preceded the event and the space in which they occurred. Our experience of theatre building and the space outside the auditorium is important not only because it is our first collision with "the social reality," to use McAuley's term, but also because it is somewhat a space-and-time portal from the outside world to the world of theatre. It serves "as a buffer zone in which one can slow down, distance oneself from the stresses of the real world" (McAuley 1999, 43). In this sense the Schaubühne space was, out of the three, perhaps the most "buffering," because it was constructed so as to anticipate the atmosphere of the performance, as it is often the case with the original production venue. When describing the *audience space* during the Berlin evening, I have already highlighted the fact that everything, from newspapers on coffee tables to books sold in the foyer, created a bridge between the spectator and the performance. As McAuley states, the way we experience this space "has an unavoidable impact upon the meanings we take away with us"(26), and the Schaubühne space contributed fully to generation of these meanings. Its role in facilitating the transformation of the real space should not be underestimated.

[60] "…an event, in which the stage space is transformed into a space of another kind"(my translation).

Unlike the Berlin performance, the Oslo and Moscow ones were shown on festivals, which inevitably had a special impact on the audience. Exchanging news and opinions, meeting the director and the artistic leaders, and simply being surrounded with the bustle of a festival event creates the feeling of being a part of something special and positive. In this sense, it also hinders one's distancing from the real world and contributes to creating not as much the performance's atmosphere, but more the expectations and even prejudices about it. Every big festival is filled with critics, theatre makers and curious spectators, who have heard (or read) something about the performance and eagerly exchange it before it is being shown. Interestingly, even by comparing the two festivals, in Oslo and in Moscow, we can already imagine the courses of the audience's expectations. The International Ibsen Festival is a celebration of Ibsen's works and a showcase of their interpretations and adaptations. The spectators are therefore more likely to judge the performances in the same manner, not as individual works of art, but more as adaptations of Ibsen's texts. The International Festival-School Territoria, on the other hand, has built its reputation on bringing experimental and radical productions in order to acquaint Moscow audience with new theatre practices. The attitude of most spectators can thus be characterized as curious, as if they are coming to see what else is going on in the minds of these strange, but remarkable western directors. Moreover, the Oslo spectators had more time and opportunity to explore the audience space before the performance (at least those of them who came for the short meeting with Ostermeier), which did not necessarily bring them together, but rather established a certain distance between them as individuals, each of whom was enjoying their own circle in their own corner. By contrast, the Moscow audience, storming onto the entrance and then the auditorium, from the very beginning felt itself as a crowd. Although most of the people were irritated with everyone from their neighbors to the festival organizers, this feeling was the outcome of them being a part of a group, a mass, a collective of spectators, which forecasted similar behavior during the discussion scene. In this case the audience space, even if rather "unconsciously," have nevertheless contributed to arousing such feelings among the spectators that found their outcome during the performance.

All of the spaces constituting theatre share the same ultimate aim, to facilitate the metamorphosis of the existing stage space with its physical organization (its width-depth, the ways to the off-stage, the set, the furniture, and the occupation of the stage by the actors' bodies) into a new *theatrical space*. The term "theatrical space" is used, for instance, in Anne Ubersfeld's work *Reading Theatre*, where it is defined as "the image (indeed the reverse, the negative image) and the counterproof of real space" (1999, 94). Ubersfeld argues:

> […] theatrical space is the very locus for mimesis: constructed from textual elements, theatrical space must at the same time project itself as representational – a figure for something from the real world. But a figure for what? […] Stage space is itself the locus for concrete theatricality, that activity which creates performance [...] (1999, 96)

In other words, theatrical space is related both to reality and fiction, and this dual nature distinguishes it from all other spaces. On the one hand, it brings in the fictional space, namely "the place or places presented, represented or evoked onstage and off" (McAuley 1999, 29). At the same time, it retains its connection to the real space, not only due to the presence of real bodies of the performers and the spectators (as well as real objects on stage and in the auditorium). As McAuley puts it, the performance space (an equivalent to Ubersfeld's theatrical space suggested in his taxonomy) is "the divided yet nevertheless unitary space in which the two constitutive groups (performers and spectators) meet and work together to create the performance experience" (26). In this notion he follows Herrmann, who keeps highlighting that the theatrical experience of space is shared by the actors and the audience. Moreover, according to Herrmann, it is in fact aroused by the combination of four experiences of space, each of which relate to one of the four co-creators of the performance, the playwright, the actor, the director, and the audience. Let us illustrate this notion by the example of *Ein Volksfeind*.

The first space that Herrmann examines is *das Raumerlebnis des dramatischen Dichters* (the space of the dramatic author). Although the dramatist does not often participate in the creation of the production, and his text exists rather autonomously from him, his role should not be underestimated. As Brander Matthews argues, a dramaturge, unlike a lyric poet, cannot be satisfied with merely self-expression, he "cannot labor for himself alone; he has to admit the spectators as his special partners" (1910, 69). Even if we are talking about a play that was written several centuries ago and was initially meant for another audience, the task of crafting it in a way that facilitates its presentation on stage is essential for the dramatist. It is often argued that Ibsen aimed primarily at the book market and not at theatre (Andersen 2011) or even that while leaving for Rome in 1864 he "made an immediate decision to turn his back on the two things that he hated most: […] Norway and the theatre" (Meyer 1980, 20). However, even if these hypotheses are true, Ibsen's plays have a clear structure and strong dramatic tools that facilitate their presentation on stage. His non-dramatic, long expositions and his technique to confront the main characters with the ghosts from their past present "a challenge and at the same time a gift to the director," especially the one concerned with human behavior in daily-life (Ostermeier 2010, 5). In other words, as

Ostermeier puts it in an interview with *The Global and Mail* (May 22, 2013), Ibsen "provides me with well-made, plot-driven plays, which I can then rewrite and adapt for my purposes." He has not, however, "rewritten" Ibsen's text alone. This task was completed by Florian Borchmeyer, the author of the stage version whose role can be seen in "die Übertragung [eines] rein wortkünstlerischen Gebildes in den Bühnenraum, auf dem das Werk zur Darstellung kommen soll"[61] (Herrmann 2006, 503). In the previous section I have already given some examples of Borchmeyer's work on *Ein Volksfeind*, including "rejuvenation" of the main character and text amendments. Moreover, he had to structure the storyline in a way that the discussion with the audience, its form and topic, feels natural in the flow of the action. In this sense, Herrmann argues, the dramatist's experience of space is strongly related to the one of the director.

The figure of the director in contemporary theatre cannot be underestimated. He is somewhat of "der Anwalt jedes der drei Faktoren: des Dichters, des Schauspielers and des Publikums"[62] whose role is "[der] Ausgleich der Verschiedenheiten der Raumerlebnisse"[63] (Herrmann 2006, 511). Moreover, same as in the dramatist's case, the peculiarities of participatory theatre present additional challenge to the director, whose task is thus to consider different scenarios of spectators' behaviour and to create a natural passage to the rest of the performance. In Berlin this transition was indeed very smooth; moreover, the *illusion* of a completely improvisational scene was so credible that it felt like actors have lost all control of what is going on. One should not forget, however, as Herbert Blau reminds us, that "[t]here is nothing more illusory in performance than the illusion of the unmediated" (1982, 142); in other words, the game of the actors loosing and regaining control in *Ein Volksfeind* is carefully crafted by its creators. However, in Moscow it became evident that some scenarios were not quite expected, hence the performers' confusion in how to bring the spectators back to their places and remind them that there is not only real but also fictional space of the performance they are dealing with. This situation once again reminds us of Peymann's production of *Publikumsbeschimpfung* mentioned in the previous section, with the audience storming onto the stage in an attempt to redefine the actors-spectators relationship by getting physically involved in the action on stage. The director in turn felt that by doing that the spectators "questioned his authority and authorship" and therefore "denied

[61] "The transfer of [an] artistic work that is purely a creation of the art of writing to the stage space, where this work should become a performance."
[62] "...the advocate of each of the three factors: the one of the dramatist, the on the actor and the one of the audience"
[63] "…[the] equalization of the diversities of the experiences of space"

them the right to physically interfere in his work and to change it through their actions" (see Fischer-Lichte 2008c, 21-22). Although Ostermeier's characters deliberately invited the spectators to participate, in the end he made no provision for an action change, for instance, for an alternative ending in case the spectators stand up for Doctor Stockmann in such a firm manner, as they did in Moscow. The Moscow experience is thus precious not only because of *what* happened, but also because it showed that the performers were not prepared to let the situation out of control and fully pass their control to the audience. Even if they seemed to have done it in the discussion scene, they ultimately insisted on a more traditional relationship between spectators and actors.

The actor's experience of space is, according to Herrmann, the most important of the four, it is „das Entscheidende der theatralischen Leistung,"[64] which „erzeugt das eigentliche, das reinste Kunstwerk, das das Theater hervorzubringen imstande ist"[65] (Herrmann 2006, 504). Any actor is both a creator of the performance and a "tool" for creating it. As Konstantin Stanislavsky stated, theatre possesses a unique "material for embodying its creations," which no other form of art has, an actor, who "sculptures his creations from the palpitating nerves of his living body"[66] (1954, 472). Moreover, an actor embraces both the real person and the fictional character in one body, which implies behaving and making decisions on behalf of both of them. When the spectators accuse Aslaksen of concealing the truth and agreeing to give people poisonous water, he has to respond to these attacks from the position of his character and certainly not as David Ruland embodying him. Similarly, if any of the spectators try to point to the fictional nature of the event, as it was the case during the Oslo performance, David Ruland's role is to keep the illusion and not give in to any attempts of breaking it, which he did by making a witty comment on the reference to Ibsen. Interestingly, in Moscow the situation was quite reversed, which illustrates that the actor's abilities to create and maintain the fictional space vary not only within productions (or actors), but also from one performance to another. It seemed rather easy for the Schaubühne actors to appear in the discussion as their characters in a situation where the spectators attempted to question it. However, it turned out to be a lot harder to behave the same way in an opposite situation, when the spectators broke the established pattern and awaited a real

[64] "…the bottom line of the theatre achievement."
[65] "---creates the genuine, the purest work of art that the theatre is able to produce." Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Russian are mine.
[66] The original citation goes: "какое из других искусств располагает таким материалом для воплощения своих созданий, какой дан нашему искусству? […] творческий дух артиста лепит свои создания трепещущими нервами из своей живой плоти."

decision from the fictional characters. This also proves that the theatrical experience of space is maintained through the collaboration of actors and spectators.

3.2 The space of the audience and "the question of the spectator"

I have deliberately saved the forth theatrical experience of space, the one of the audience, for last, not only because I consider it to be the most interesting of all four spaces, but, more to the point, because it should be examined closer in order to find answers to the research question of this thesis. Let us therefore take a brief look at the way the idea of the spectator's role in theatre has developed among theatre practitioners and theoreticians.

Proclaiming it a separate theatrical experience of space and thereby challenging the division between production and reception was Herrmann's groundbreaking idea that coincided with the numerous theatre practices emerging at the turn of the last century. Many theatre leaders, frustrated with the existing theatre systems, felt that performance should include spectators as participants and sought to find new forms that would return theatre to its true nature. Jacques Rancière calls it a craving for "a theatre without spectators," which does not imply performing in front of empty seats, but instead making the spectators active and engaged (2011, 3). For instance, Bertold Brecht, whose techniques as well as their application in Ostermeier's production have already been mentioned in the previous chapter, was greatly concerned with the spectator's question and criticized the position audience holds in contemporary theatre. Here is his ironic description of what a person entering a theater is likely to observe:

> […] ziemlich reglose Gestalten in einem eigentümlichen Zustand: sie scheinen in einer starken Anstrengung alle Muskeln anzuspannen, wo diese nicht erschlafft sind in einer starken Erschöpfung. Untereinander verkehren sie kaum, ihr Beisammensein ist wie das von lauter Schlafenden, aber solchen, die unruhig träumen, weil sie, wie das Volk von den Albträumern sagt, auf dem Rücken liegen. Sie haben freilich ihre Augen offen, aber sie schauen nicht, sie stieren, wie sie auch nicht hören, sondern lauschen. Sie sehen wie gebannt auf die Bühne, welcher Ausdruck aus dem Mittelalter stammt, der Zeit der Hexen und Kleriker. Schauen und Hören sind Tätigkeiten, mitunter vergnügliche, aber diese Leute scheinen von jeder Tätigkeit entbunden und wie solche, mit denen etwas gemacht wird. [67] (1993, 75-76)

[67] "[...] somewhat motionless figures in rather odd state: they seem to tense all their muscles in a strong effort, except where these are not flabby and deeply exhausted. They hardly communicate with each other, their mutual

To alter the situation Brecht introduced certain techniques of *Verfremdung* (estrangement) that would establish an active and critical relation between the audience and the play performed. In his work *For Marx* Louis Althusser argues that Brecht's theory of estrangement has often been falsely interpreted as merely functional, as a tool for acting technique. However, the profound thesis of the theory of *episches Theater* in general and *Verfremdungseffekt* in particular lies in breaking "the classical forms of identification, where the audience hangs on the destiny of the 'hero' and all its emotional energy is concentrated on theatrical catharsis." Instead, argues Althusser, Brecht "wanted to make the spectator into an actor who would complete the unfinished play, but in real life" (1969, 146). As I have already shown in the production analysis section, Ostermeier applied this technique to the main character of *Ein Volksfeind*; by turning Thomas Stockmann from an unquestionable hero into a rather controversial figure Ostermeier made the identification with the main character a *choice* of the spectator. The discussion with the audience, therefore, serves to the development of the critical attitude towards the character, primarily because the spectators are not only asked to make this choice publically (by raising their hands), but also to defend it in polemics with Aslaksen.

Brecht's concerns about the active attitude of the audience were shared by other theatre practitioners in different countries of the western world. They drove Vsevolod Meyerhold to the creation of *biomechanics*, a method that would facilitate actors to perform within the form of *conventional theatre* (*условный театр*),[68] a theatre of "dynamic origin"[69] (1968, 139). In this theatre an actor never forgets that he is performing in front of spectators, while a spectator never forgets that he is in the theatre and thereby becomes another creator of the performance, who has to "use his imagination to *creatively complete the implications* offered by stage"[70] (141). Similar to Meyerhold, Anotinine Artaud believed that "an idea of the theatre has been lost" and needs to be restored, yet again, by challenging the role of the

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presence is like that of loud sleepers, but those who dream restless, because, as people say about those who have nightmares, they lie on their back. True, they do have their eyes open, but they do not watch, they stare, as if they also do not hear, but eavesdrop. They look entranced at the stage, an expression that comes from the Middle Ages, the time of witches and clerics. Watching and listening are activities, occasionally pleasant ones, but these people seem relieved of any activity as someone to whom something is being done."

[68] The English translation of the term was introduced by Edward Braun as 'stylized theatre' (see Meyerhold 1969). However, even though stylization played an essential role in Meyerhold's method, Meyerhold considered it to be only a period in his artistic explorations, which later gave place to grotesque. Therefore I preferred to use a direct translation from the Russian term 'условный театр' exploited by the director.

[69] Original citation: "Новый театр снова тяготеет к началу динамическому." Interestingly, Meyerhold, following a Russian writer and leader of St. Petersburg theatre circle Vyacheslav Ivanov, suggests that the new theatre form will make it possible to put together such different creators as Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Verhaeren, Wagner, commenting it as "the suffering god is two-faced" ("страдающий бог двулик") (1968, 348).

[70] Original citation: "Условный театр создает такую инсценировку, при которой зрителю приходится своим воображением *творчески дорисовывать* данные сценой *намеки*"

audience (1958, 84). For this purpose Artaud introduced *the theatre of cruelty* (*théâtre de la cruauté*), where spectators are affected by the use of sound, lighting, and expressive acting techniques, and thus placed in the center of the performance. Interestingly, Brecht, Meyerhold, and Artaud draw their beliefs on the true meaning of theatre from Greek theatre in its golden age. Therefore, to understand the emergence of the question of the spectator investigated here, it is worth looking at the nature of a theatre event in Ancient Greece. The limitations of this work do not allow me to fully describe this phenomenon; instead, I will cover the most important points with regard to the role of the audience.

The first crucial characteristic of Ancient Greek theatre is that it represented an institution of the public sphere, or the sphere of *polis*. This sphere, according to Jürgen Habermas, was strictly distinguished from *oikos*, the private sphere, and embodied "a realm of freedom and permanence." Public life, or, as it was called, *bios politicos*, meant that the citizens "interacted as equals with equals (*homoioi*), but each did his best to excel" (Habermas 1991, 4). In other words, people who gathered for a performance during the Dionysian festivals were not merely spectators, but citizens equal to one another, both those on stage and those remaining in the audience. The theatre itself served not only as a place for dramatic competitions, but also as a forum for political speeches and rituals of the *polis*, which made it an important institution for building and maintaining social identity. This characteristic is important to underline, because it ensured the existence of such audience "which is quite unparalleled in the history of drama in that in coincided – in principle and to a great extent in fact – with the civil community" (see Longo 1992). Moreover, the spacial organization in the Ancient Greek theatre also suggested the equality of stage and audience. The spectators indeed were active participants, but in quite another sense; their "voice" on stage was projected by chorus, which consisted of the very same citizens and bridged stage and auditorium. In addition, spectators and performers shared the same route to enter the theatre (*eisodoi*) and the same light conditions. "Some contracts between audience and players, built into our expectations of dramatic experience, were absent, therefore, from Dyonysos' theatre" (see Padel 1992). Last, but not least, was the spectators' involvement in determining the fate of the play. Though their representatives, they decided the winners of the competition, who were then announced on the Assembly attended by everyone. Moreover, as Longo argues, the audience was also engaged in selecting the plays for the competition, through the jury, chosen among them (1992, 16). Thus, as Longo highlights, "the concept of artistic autonomy, of creative spontaneity, of the author's personality, so dear to bourgeois esthetics, must be radically reframed, when speaking of Greek theatre, by considerations of

the complex institutional and social conditions within which the processes of literary production in fact took place" (15).

To sum up the above-mentioned characteristics, Ancient Greek theatre was a complex matrix, whose collective nature ensured its place as the assembly of *polis*, where each performance was meant to be perceived not as an individual event, but as part of the whole ritualized process. In other words, the nature of Greek theatre depended upon numerous conditions and social institutions that would now be impossible to replicate, which has, however, never prevented theatre practitioners from resorting to it as an ideal theatre model. For instance, Meyerhold believed that conventional theatre will "break the frame" that creates a gap between the stage and the audience and thus encourage the renaissance of Ancient theatre, "precisely the very same theatre that has everything a contemporary theatre needs"[71] (1968, 141-142). It seems, moreover, that contemporary theatre practices continue to reflect on Greek theatre and exploit its forms and dramas. In chapter 3 of *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008c) Erika Fischer-Lichte studies three theatre forms, developed respectively by Hermann Nitsch, Richard Schechner, and Einar Schleef, each of whom sought to create a community of actors and spectators in their own way by referring to Ancient tragedy or methodology. However, as Fischer-Lichte concludes, Greek theatre "arouse out of [the established] political community," whereas in Nitsch's and Schechner's attempts it merely served as its "replacement, anti-thesis, or its aesthetic-utopian version" (2008c, 56).[72]

The reason why practitioners keep turning to Greek theatre is precisely the desire to establish a community between actors and spectators. As Rancière puts it, "[t]heater accuses itself of rendering spectators passive and thereby betraying its essence as community action" and is thus often "presented as a mediation striving for its own abolition" (2011, 7-8). This idea is close to Blau's statement that "there is something in the nature of theatre which from the very beginning of theatre has always resisted being theatre" (1982, 143). A solution suggested by Rancière is not to transform the role of the spectator in the theatre, as Brecht, Artaud, and other practitioners tried to do, but instead to question the assumptions on which the very idea of spectator's passivity is based on. Rancière therefore proposes to *emancipate* the spectator by challenging the opposition between viewing and acting and accepting that

[71] "…есть именно тот самый театр, в котором есть все, что нужно нашему сегодняшнему театру"

[72] The third practice that Fischer-Lichte studies, Schleef's theatre, used, in contrast to Nitsch and Schechner, the Dionysian principle in building a community, which "shattered individualization by inducing a state of ecstasy and transforming the spectators into members of a dancing and singing community." Schleef therefore focused on "the perpetual collision of the individual and the group" and not on harmonious communities, as his two fellow-craftsmen did (see Fischer-Lichte 2008c, chapter 3).

viewing is also an action and that the spectators participate in the performance by interpreting it through the prism of their unique personality (Rancière 2011, 13). Although such view corresponds to the notion that each spectator is an active interpreter of the performance, which is generally shared by theatre scholars and practitioners, an important difference should be made. Rancière claims that the condition of spectator is not a passive one, because being a spectator is a natural situation, and we all "learn and teach, act and know, as spectators who all the time link what we see to what we have seen and said, done and dreamed." This idea, however, allows him to draw a parallel between the reception of different art forms – be it "teaching or playing, speaking, writing, making art or looking at it" – and claim that a simple fact that "living bodies onstage address bodies assembled in the same place" is not enough "to make theatre the vehicle for a sense of community, radically different from the situation of individuals seated in front of a television" (Rancière 2011, 17). Moreover, both Rancière and Blau question the communitarian essence of theatre. The latter, for instance, states:

> Performance may transform the one performing. That it has the capacity to transform seems to be universal. But at the level of community, whatever the powers of performance once were, they no longer are. (Blau 1982, 159)

Similar to Rancière, Blau compares theatre experience to television and even sport and arrives at a conclusion that the latter in fact have more transformative power for the spectators than a theatre event. "We still have nothing in the theatre to correspond to the experience you have in a stadium during the play of a double reverse, not to mention the stupedous involvment of spectators all around the world in a championship soccer match" (Blau 1982, 159). Although it seems hard to argue against the greatness of a live sport event for its fans, it is precisely this live-ness that makes it so remarkable, which is not merely something a theatre *can* offer, but something that constitutes its very nature and gradually differs it from film and television. We can therefore imagine Herrmann' answer to Rancière's argument: it is precisely the co-presence of real bodies in real space allows for the audience's sensible comprehension of the actor's actions in theatre, while film and television exploit only eyes and ears of the audience. "Sein [schauspielerisches] Raumerlebnis kann nun umso eher vom Publikum mitübernommen werden, als dieses Publikum sich im gleichen realen, nur umzudeutenden Raum mit ihm [dem Schauspieler] befindet"[73] (Herrmann 2006, 508).

[73] "His [actor's] experience of space can then be easily and sooner co-owned by the audience, when this audience finds itself in the same real, but differently interpreted space as he [the actor]." Interestingly, Herrmann thus states that the feeling of sharing the same space can be truly experienced only by those

Moreover, this co-presence of actors and spectators in one space implies that not only the audience hears the actors, but the reverse holds true as well. Erika Fischer-Lichte call this phenomena *the feedback loop*, defining it as "a self-referential, autopoietic system enabling a fundamentally open, unpredictable process" (2008c, 39). Each spectator has the ability to influence the performance by his/her reactions and is therefore "as involved and responsible for a situation nobody single-handedly created," something a person watching television does not experience (165). Moreover, again in response to Blau and Rancière, it is precisely the feelback loop that "identifies transformation as a fundamental category of an aesthetics of the performance" (50).

The question of community creation, however, still stands and is hard to find a clear answer to, as far as the mainstream western theatre is concerned. If the spectators' reactions to the action on stage are reduced to conventional ones, such as laughing and clapping, how are we to realize that they feel themselves a part of the collective, even if is this the case? We can therefore only define a community when we have clear signals indicating its existence, such as people involved in a collective action. In other words, participatory theatre might not be the only case of community creation, but it makes this creation evident and possible to analyze. We cannot determine whether the spectators of *Ein Volksfeind* truly feel themselves as part of the actors-spectators community before the discussion scene begins; similarly, we cannot speak for those who do not participate in the discussion. We can, however, examine the behavior of those spectators who accepted the invitation to participate, which gives us another parameter in comparing the three given performances.

3.3 Frame analysis in participatory theatre: invitation, acceptance, and rejection

By using the term "to accept the invitation," I am referring to Gareth White, who suggests using the method of frame analysis in researching participatory theatre. This method was originally introduced by the Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman in order to study the organization of social experience and "develop a vocabulary to describe how we organize our perception of the multitude of different situations we observe and find ourselves in" (White 2013, 34). White lists four types of episodic conventions that are used by performers to

spectators who sit in parterre; the experience of the rest of the audience is, actually, not so different from the one in the cinema.

introduce a participatory frame: overt, implicit, covert, and accidental; the first being the most relevant for *Ein Volksfeind* analysis. This type of inviting the audience to participate in the action is the most direct, as the performers "make clear to the audience what they want them to do" (40). For instance, the spectators of *Ein Volksfeind,* being instructed by Aslaksen, have a clear idea of the way they are asked to respond: first – to raise hands if they favor Doctor Stockmann, second – to support their decision by speaking their mind out. Although these two actions relate to the same type of invitation, an overt invitation, they offer two different ways of participation. This distinction is important to understand, because there are several factors based on which the audience makes a decision to accept an invitation or not. Agreeing to participate does not merely mean following the instructions given by the performer; it means "accepting an altered social role," as well as "some risk to social esteem" (White 2013, 159). Moreover, every participant takes over several roles: *the performer*, subjected to being watched and evaluated by others, *the spectator*, who continues to observe the behavior of others, and *the performance* itself, or the source of the performance that emerges from the participant's body as a manifestation of his choices (161).

Let us turn to *Ein Volksfeind* to illustrate it. There are two overt invitations to act suggested by Aslaksen: to raise a hand and to speak up. The first one possesses two essential features that the latter does not: irrationality and loss of responsibility, both being the inherent characteristics of crowd behavior. When Aslaksen asks everyone who supports Doctor Stockmann to put their hands up, the spectators are given almost no time to think, which means that their decision to act "may have arrived pre-noetically, in conjunction with some kind of social affordance associated with a frame of interaction" (White 2013, 125). As one of the spectators pointed out during the Oslo performance, it is no wonder that everyone supports Doctor Stockmann who embodies the image of a lonely defender of truth, because it is rather easy to assume that supporting a positive hero is a good deed. Not only are we given no time to truly reflect on Stockmann's words, we also see our fellow spectators raising their hands and naturally rush to follow them. The phenomenon of crowd behavior has been the subject of research of many psychologists, including Gustave Le Bon, Sigmund Freud, Steve Reicher, Elias Canetti and others. Here is how White uses the works of Reicher and Canetti to illustrate what happens to the crowd at a theatre:

> When we laugh, cheer, and applaud together we access a kind of social affordance to show that we are sharing the same reactions as those around us. But the process of apprehending a show is not so simple as receiving it entirely individually and then agreeing with those nearby. The feelings we share with others around us in relation to a show are far more reciprocal than this, we look for evidence of other people's reactions

> […] to validate what we feel, so that we show reactions that do not contrast markedly with what is being shown by others around us (2013, 135).

What happens when Aslaksen asks the audience to articulate their opinion? The characteristics of the invitation (and thus the conditions that influence the decision to get involved) immediately change. The spectators are suddenly given time to think and assess the risks of accepting the invitation. Naturally, they bear no risks of being physically injured or any other risks of that sort; nevertheless, the idea of putting one's reputation and self-image in jeopardy is quite a high risk in contemporary society. Inviting the spectators to publically share their mind "presents special opportunities for embarrassment, for mis-performance and reputational damage" (White 2013, 73). Moreover, this situation is characterized by the blurring of the boundary between the fictional and the real spaces. On the one hand, the spectators are asked to reflect on Stockmann's words during the performance and within the performance, as the question comes from a fictional character and not the actor playing him. At the same time they are given no text or scenario on how to react, they have to speak their mind out on behalf of them as real people without taking somebody else's role. As Fischer-Lichte argues, "collapse of the opposition between art and reality and of all binaries resulting from this opposition transfers the participants into a *liminal state*" (2008c, 176; emphasis mine). She borrows this term from ritual studies and Victor Turner, who defines it as a state "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (2011, 95). Characteristic for this state is a sense of confusion grounded in the fact that old rules have been disrupted and new ones have not yet been established. The liminal experience is thus often followed by the feeling of "irritation, of destabilization of the self, of the inability to make sense of what is perceived and to place it in a coherent order" (Fischer-Lichte 2008a, 93). Western mainstream theatre is characterized by established patterns of rules on the role and behaviour of actors and spectators, namely a certain distribution of power where actors are the ones who perform and spectators are the ones who sit and watch. When the spectators of *Ein Volksfeind* are asked to participate in the discussion, the rules of the game change: they are not longer merely voyeurs, but actors in a performance, and the rules for their behavior as such are unclear and undetermined. As Fischer-Lichte claims:

> Since such dichotomous pairs like the 'real' and the 'fictional' serve not only as tools to describe the world, but also as regulators for our behaviour and actions, their destabilization, their collapse, results, on the other hand, in a destabilization of our perception of the world, ourselves and others, and, on the other, in a shattering of the norms and rules that guide our behaviour (Fischer-Lichte 2008a, 95).

How are the spectators likely to behave in this situation? Since the liminal experience brings in a sense of discomfort, they are likely to try and get out of it by either accepting their altered role or rejecting it. The first action would equal to accepting the invitation, using White's terminology, a situation that occurred both in Berlin and in Moscow, where after a little hesitation the spectators got involved into a dispute with the characters on stage. In Oslo, however, the spectators clearly refused the invitation to participate; even if they have made some attempts to do so in the beginning of the scene, they soon decided to break the theatre illusion and regain their status as spectators-observers. Their behaviour, however, can be justified on the basis of the factors determining our desire to participate, explained by White. At first, the spectators raise their hands, supporting the main character and following the other spectators, thus being double-sure of performing a good deed. Then Aslaksen accuses them of not reflecting upon their actions and favoring a fascist and an anarchist. Getting "punished" for an act that they have previously evaluated as risk-free, the spectators are naturally extremely reluctant to accept the invitation to participate further, especially in a more risky situation. Moreover, the decision to act is highly influenced by our assessment of "the potential activity appropriate to the invitation" (White 2013, 59). It means that we are willing to participate as long as the behavior that is expected from us remains within the limits of our understanding of how it is appropriate to behave. The Oslo audience evidently considered theatre to be a suitable place for laughing, applauding or even silently raising their hands; however, the idea of publically defending one's opinion in front of the actors and the other spectators seemed rather deviant. The Oslo audience appeared to have had a very strong notion of the way the roles are distributed in theatre: the "job" of spectators is to sit and watch the performance they have paid for, whereas the "job" of actors is to talk and act. As was clear from their responses, the spectators have in no respect considered their role to publically discuss and question the action on stage, especially when the performance is based on a well-known canonic play. Since the invitation to participate was in discordance with their understanding of audience's behavior, they dismissed it as inappropriate. In contrast, the Berlin spectators seemed to be more than at ease with the idea of expressing their opinion in theatre, which lead to their fast acceptance of the role of participants.

The Moscow performance in turn presents an interesting case of combining the two models of accepting the invitation described above. When one spectator suggested going on stage to stand together with Thomas Stockmann, the audience paused on this suggestion, which indicates that they were taking time to think upon this new invitation to act and to evaluate the risks of it. Deciding in favor of it would imply that every individual who stands

up and goes on stage would be seen by others, thus affected by the risk of judgment and embarrassment. However, as White points out, "the understanding on which we build our assessment of risk is ongoing, and will be influenced by the evidence of the actions and implied risk assessments of others" (2013, 81). The first few spectators had to take the risk of being witness participating; the behavior of others was again determined by crowd psychology. At a certain point the number of people *on* stage began to prevail over the part remaining in the auditorium, which means that it became more embarrassing to remain seated. From then on the spectators on stage functioned as a collective body, as if any differences between them were eliminated. Elias Canetti calls this phenomenon the *discharge* of the crowd, defining it as "[t]he moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of their differences and feel equal." He argues that before that moment "the crowd does not actually exist; it is the discharge which creates it" (1978, 17).

3.4 Towards the politics of performance

The notion of equality within the community inevitably brings us to the question of politics. Fischer-Lichte argues that the dichotomy of the aesthetic and the political collapses every time a role reversal based on bodily co-presence of performers and spectators occurs (2008c, 44). She defines role-reversal as a process "that transforms the conventional subject-object relationship (conventional for theatre and, even more so, for the visual arts) into a scintillating, ever-elusive negotiation" and present, together with community creation and experimenting with physical contact between actors and spectators, a strategy used by contemporary theatre makers to draw attention to the feedback loop and make the spectators physically experience the action instead of merely witnessing it (40). For instance, *Ein Volksfeind* evidently holds the idea of role reversal; by inviting the spectators to participate, the actors are suggesting exchanging roles with them. However, whether the transformation of subject-object relationship indeed takes place, depends on the audience's decision to accept the invitation or reject it. We therefore need to look at each performance individually in order to determine it.

Does it also imply that we have to analyze every single case to determine whether a concrete performance is political? Let us start answering this question by understanding the concept of politics. As mentioned in the Introduction, I will use Rancière' theory in redefining it, primarily because for him politics is not a state, but an action that "always

involves interruptions, interventions, or effects. Politics is not; politics disrupts" (Chambers 2012). Indeed, if we look at Rancière's definition, we find out that the way we normally use the word "politics" falls within what he calls "police," including policy-making and hierarchical relationships between human beings. Politics, instead, "is not the exercise of power," but something that can be conceived within the relationship of *avoir-part* (partaking) (Rancière 2010, 27). In this sense, it is a rather paradoxical form of action, because it suggests that a man is "at once the agent of an action and the matter upon which that action is exercised," which in turn "contradicts the conventional logic of action" (29). However, unlike Arendt, Rancière does not claim that any action is political *par excellence*; moreover, for him there is no such thing as pure politics. He is highly critical of the so-called "return of politics" which aims at puryfing politics and separating it from social, as by doing so, he claims, we "in fact announce its extinction" (43). Similarly, he critisizes the idea of "returning art to politics," followed by "a specific notion of art's efficacy." In his essay "The Paradoxes of Political Art" Rancière states: "Art is presumed to be effective politically because it displays the marks of domination, or parodies mainstream icons, or even because it leaves the spaces reserved for it and becomes a social practice" (2010, 134-135). However, this kind of art does not interest Rancière, as it suffers from the gap that separates it from "its real forms of effectiveness." He gives an example of a frequent attempt of contemporary art to criticize the overrule of commodity and consumer society. Unfortunately, concludes Rancière, such attempts do not challenge our ideas of the power distribution, since it is quite hard to find anyone who is not aware of the supreme power of commodity in our world. So "the critical *dispositif* then starts to spin around itself" and instead of using parody *as* a method of critique, becomes "the simple parodic *mise-en-scene* of its own magic" (144-145). Therefore, according to Rancière, it is not the topic or subject that creates the politics of art. Even though in *Ein Volksfeind* the speech of Doctor Stockmann is highly critical of consumer society and its values, it is not this critique that makes the speech political.

Which art is then political in Rancièrian sense? As Tanke explains, "[i]t is in terms of the formation and contestation of space and time that art can be said to have a political capacity, and it is thus within this broader notion of the aesthetics as *aisthēsis* that the relationship between art and politics must be situated" (2011, 5). In the Introduction I have already presented the concept of *aisthēsis*, or the aesthetical regime of the art that is meant here. Rancière defines it within the relationship between art an life that is an interplay of three scenarios where either art becomes life, life becomes art, or both "exchange their

properties" (2010, 119). This relationship, however, is not that simple and even paradoxical as the heteronomy and the autonomy of art collapse:

> The politics of art in the aesthetic regime of art, or rather its metapolitics, is determined by this foundational paradox: in this regime, art is art inasmuch as it is also non-art, something other than art.... There is an originary and unceasing contradiction at work. The solitude of the work carries a promise of emancipation, but the accomplishment of the promise is the suppression of art as a separate reality, its transformation into a form of life (Rancière 2009, 36).

What helps us understand this regime and look for particular examples within it is the idea that both aesthetics and politics challenge the existing distribution of the sensible. Once again, for Rancière politics is "by no means a reality that might be deduced from the neccessities leading people to gather in communities," but rather "an exception in relation to the principles according to which this gathering occurs" (2010, 35). Similarly, aesthetics is political inasmuch as it introduces a dissensus into the existing distribution of roles and meanings. Dissensus in this case "is not a confrontation between interests or opinion. It is the demonstration (manifestation) of a gap in the sensible itself" (38). Art is then (and only then) political, when it challenges the existing notions of the sensible and, at the same time, retains its identity as art. Moreover, Rancière pays great attention to equality in art, ensured by the aesthetics regime of the arts' rejection of the hierarchical distributions. "The cummulative effect of this rupture is the positing of new forms of relaton between the arts themselves, the subjects they depict, and the manner in which they relate to their audiences" (Tanke 2011, 85). The same principle attributes to abandoning the master-pupil relationship between theater maker and spectator and instead "emancipating" the spectator from having to see and experience exactly what the theatre maker wants him to. The aesthetics regime challenges the inegalitarian principle of supposed identity between cause and effect, between what is produced and what is percieved (Rancière 2011). Interestingly, this idea is rather often subjected to criticism among theatre scholars. For instance, White dismisses Rancière's analogy between the "Ignorant Schoolmaster" and the theatre maker and claims: "It simply isn't the case that most practitioners these days (and arguments could also be made on behalf of Brecht and Artaud in this respect) have a thesis that they wish to transmit" (2013, 22). However, although Rancière indeed uses the examples of Brecht and Artaud, he does it merely to critisize the idea of liberating spectators from their passivity and suggests replacing it with the notion of performance as an autonomus thing exisitng between the idea of the artist and the sensation of the spectator. In *The Emancipated Spectator* he argues:

> It is not the transmission of the artist's knowledge or inspiration to the spectator. It is the third thing that is owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform transmission, any identity of cause and effect (Rancière 2011, 15).

But does not this idea of performance as the third medium follow Herrmann's concept of the shared experience of space or the unitary performance space McAuley talks about? It seems to me that Rancière is merely saying that we should not judge the spectator's compherension of performance based on the artistic intention; a thought that celebrates the nature of theatre instead of attacking it. Same though lies in the basics of his critique of art practises that are denominated as political. "There is something wrong, he claims, with the idea that political effects are to be located in the artwork itself or, in particular, in the intention of the artist" (Rancière and Dasgupta 2008 , 75). The question that then inevitably rises is the following: where are these political effects located? Or, to mirror the research question of this thesis, are there any criteria of judging whether a work of art is political or not? Rancière's answer is no, "there are no criteria, only choices" (73). What is plausible to do, he argues, is to determine the existence of political potential within a given artwork. Shortly, if it belongs to the aesthetic regime of the arts and creates "a disruption of a given organization of the relation between the sensible presentation and forms of meanings," then such work has political potential, but there is no guarantee that this potential will not remain merely a potential (74).

However, it should be underlined that the reason why Rancière deprives us from the possibility of meausiring the politics of a particular artwork is because he is talking primarily about literature and film practices. In such instances it is naturally impossible to foresee the reception of a certain work and its direct effect on the audience. Theatre presents a conceptually different case. As I have already shown in this section, a performance is happening here and now, which means that production and reception are simultaneous and unseparatable. Moreover, as we ourselves are in the theatre among the other spectators, we experience the performance *together* with them and *witness* their reactions. Three important specifications have to be made here. First, experiencing the performance as a spectator is – and I could not stress it more – an indenpensable condition of judging a particular theatre work. No review or narration, no matter how good and precise they are, can make us *feel* what it is like to be in that specific auditorium in that specific time. Accordingly, we cannot judge whether a *production* is political, because then we once again face the problem of unknown effect Rancière warns us about. We have to tackle every single performance and

judge it separetely from any previous showings of it and, most important, from the artistic intentions behind it. Last but not least, it is far more plausible to determine whether a performance is political or not in the instances when the spectators are involved as active participants in the action. It is not to say that only participatory theatre can be political. Rather, as argued earlier, it provides us with somewhat of "magnifying glass" to study the processes that otherwise occur on a barely perceptible level (see Fischer-Lichte 2008c, chapter 3). Similarly, we cannot evaluate the longlasting effect a performance has on spectators from the moment they leave the roon, unless we possess further materials on the matter. To sum up all the three factors, we can only determine the *immediate* effects a *particular* performance has on the spectators and only then, when we ourselves are *a part of the audience*.

All three performances of *Ein Volksfeind* that I have seen meet the three conditions, which allows me to compare them on the criteria of politics, i.d. determine, whether each of them was political for the audience of the day or not. How am I to determine it? Let us once again have a close look at what Rancière means by "politics" and by "political potential." There is political potential in something that disrupts the existing distribution of the sensible. In this respect all three researched performances have political potential, because in each of them the actors make an attempt to disturb the conventional distribution of roles and give power to the spectators. In other words, we can adopt White's terminology and say that by inviting the spectators to participate the performers are making a step towards challenging their traditional role as those-who-act and the spectators' role as those-who-watch-and-listen. Here it should be reminded that direct, or overt, as White names it, invitation is not the only existing type, and even in non-participatory theatre performances there is a possibility of covert or accidental invitations.

The next stage is to be completed by the spectators. By accepting the invitation they are agreeing to the offer of disruption suggested by the performers. Indeed, the situation is not altered if the actors make an invitation, but the spectators reject or ignore it from the very beginning. They can send as much signals as necessary to the spectators, implying that the given distribution of roles and power is to be challenged, but the traditional relationship will be maintained unless the spectators take the next step. At this initial stage of accepting the invitation, the spectators in all three performances of *Ein Volksfeind* made the necessary step; even the ones in Oslo agreed to put their hands up and get involved in a short discussion.

The third and the most important stage is going one step further and actually altering the distribution of roles. In other words, the spectators should accept their role as co-

performers and act accordingly; whereas the actors should acknowledge the newborn participant. In Moscow and in Berlin both parties agreed that new rules have been established and proceeded to act in the new conditions. In Oslo, on the contrary, the actors failed to pass enough power to the spectators, and the latter failed to take over, which lead to a situation with the spectators returning back to their previous status and rejecting the new reality.

These three stages can in fact be rephrased around the concept of liminality previously introduced as a state in-between the possitions assigned by custom and traditions, to follow Turner's definition. The term "liminal" was initially coined by Arnold van Gennep, whose works Turner reffers to. Van Gennep examines ritual ceremonies that accompany human lives and establishes a scheme of rites of pasage from old to new reality. According to him, a complete scheme consists of three stages: *preliminal rites* (rites of separation), *liminal rites* (rites of transition), and *postliminal rites* (rites of incorporation into a new society, new role, new status) (see Gennep 2013). These three stages are comparable to the ones discussed above: giving an invitation equals the rite of separation, accepting it transfers the spectators into liminal state as can therefore be seen as the rite of transition, and accepting the altered role is nothing else but the rite of incorporation.

If we then compare the given scheme to Rancière's notion of politics, it turns out that politics, being an act that initiates a new distribution of the sensible, follows the same pattern, and in order for us to speak of the instance of politics, the stages of separation, transition, and incorporation have to occur. I thus suggest a method of judging whether a performance is political or not by determining whether the scheme of rites of passage is completed. I am not arguing that this is the only way of understanding Rancière's theory and applying it to performance research, however, this is a way that provides us with rather empirical criteria to compare different performances with each other.

The Berlin performance is perhaps the easiest one to evaluate. The stage of transition occurred rather quickly and smoothly, possibly because most of the spectators were already familiar with the idea of role reversal in theatre from their previous experience. Thus the stage of separation came not as a shock, but rather as an expectation for most of them. Accordingly, they awaited the possibility of altering their status and therefore incorporated the new role without further resistance.

The Oslo audience, on the other hand, received the idea of abandoning their position as voyeurs with certain hostility. Already the preliminal stage was alien to them, which logically lead to a rather reluctant agreement to enter the liminal phase. Receiving even more pressure at this point, being pushed by the actors to become their co-performers, the

spectators instead chose not to proceed to the postliminal stage. Even if the impulse to do so came from one or two spectators only, the rest of the audience followed the suggested path, which can also be seen as an example of the crowd behavior Canetti talks about. In any case, the third stage did not occur, the performance continued the way it was before the discussion scene, and the scheme of rites of passage was left incomplete.

What happened in Moscow? One the one hand, the situation resembles the one in Berlin, where the spectators entered the second stage without much hesitations, following the example set by the first spectator who decided to speak. Notably, it was the spectator sitting on the balcony, on a "safe distance" from the stage. Even if it was merely a coincidence, it does not contradict my impression of the Moscow spectators as not necessarily unwilling to participate, but certainly reluctant to stand out and be the ones who start it. At the same time, the Moscow situation mirrors the one in Oslo; the impulse to move from the liminal stage came from one spectator, only in Moscow the impulse was to proceed to the postliminal stage and not to reject the invitation. The scheme therefore seems complete; the spectators accepted both their altered role as performers and the new reality where their equality with the actors allows them to behave the way they want. The actors, however, were quite unprepared for such situation, which once again created a liminal space, but this time for the actors. And here the most interesting instance occurred. By abandoning their fictional identity as characters the actors in fact behaved similarly to the Oslo audience. They did not accept this double role-reversal and in the end made attempts to return to the traditional actor-spectator relationship.

If we now sum up all these points together and look at the three performances from the perspective that politics as an action occurs every time the process of accepting the new reality is compete, we can see that the political potential of *Ein Volksfeind* as a production revealed itself differently in each of the cases. The Berlin performance became unquestionably political; the act of politics occurred precisely when the spectators began to act as co-performers and the new rules have been established and accepted by all participants. The Oslo performance failed to develop the potential inherent in the production; both the spectators and the actors made attempts to transform the existing reality, but the transition was interrupted and the roles remained unaltered. The Moscow performance created an instance of politics when completing the scheme of rites of passage and thereby disrupted the existing distribution of the sensible. Moreover, it accidently created another instance for a potentially political situation, the moment the spectators went further than the expected scenario, inviting the actors to accept yet another reality and role distribution. Although this

new potential was not fully evolved, it allows us to characterize the Moscow performance as somewhat double-political or even *over*-political, as in using one act of politics to initiate another. Thus a theatre event can be not only political or not political, it can create new precedents of politics, which is the ultimate proof of the necessity to tackle every single performance individually.

4 Conclusion

If we use Jacques Rancière's theory of political and aesthetical to redefine the concept of politics and treat it not within the frame of exercise of power or hierarchical order, but instead as an action that disrupts this order, we can apply it to concrete practices, for instance to theatre performance. The special nature of theatre with the inseparability of production and reception and the existence of shared space between actors and spectators allows us to see the immediate effects a singular performance makes on the audience. It is within these effects that the potential inherent in each theatre event reveals itself. We can thereby study each concrete performance to look for evidences that help us determine whether it turned out to be political or not.

One way to see how this potential evolves into an act of politics is to study it within the scheme of rites of passages suggested by Arnold van Gennep, which consists of three stages: rites of separation, rites of transformation, and rites of identification. The second stage brings us to the notion of liminal state, used in ritual and theatre studies to describe a situation that is characterized by the collision of the real and the fictional spaces and the blurring of boundary between them. Such situation happens, for instance, in the participatory theatre, when the audience is asked to join the actors as co-performers in the action. It is often followed by the feeling of disturbance and confusion, which forces the spectators to either proceed to the stage of identification or to return back to their previous status. Gareth White suggests an alternative scheme of this process, studying the ways the audience take or reject the invitation to participate and the stages of doing it. By offering the spectators to participate, the actors are suggesting to challenge the existing distribution of power using the strategy of role reversal. When accepting this invitation, the audience goes through the process of transformation from the state of voyeurs into the state of participants. If the transformation is successful and acknowledged by all parties, the new reality is established, which allows us to view the process as an act of politics.

A comparative analysis of the different showings of the same production (in my case, *Ein Volksfeind* by Thomas Ostermeier) serves as an illustrative case study for a variety of behaviour models that arouses not from the subject or topic of the production, but from the aesthetics of individual performance. By researching three performances, in Berlin, Oslo, and Moscow, and studying their similarities and differences based on three parameters – the framing of the performance, the audience's behaviour and the occurrence of a political act – I

have come to several conclusions. First of all, the experience of the spectator starts before the performance itself, as the special organization and the atmosphere in the theatre contribute to the impression of the evening and even to the generating of meaning during the performance. Some activities preceding the performance can help establish a certain reality for the audience that would later project itself to their behaviour. Is therefore advisable to start a performance analysis with framing the performance before proceeding to its description and pay considerable attention to activities and factors that can influence the expectations of the audience towards a particular performance.

Secondly, conducting a performance analysis implies not only looking at the constant elements of the production that can be, for instance, noted while watching the video version or even by consulting the documentation of the production. Such analysis should be grounded in the personal experience of the researcher and describe the atmosphere created during the performance. It is worth to remind that artistic intentions and expectations are important as long as they find their realization during the performance. For instance, such experienced director as Ostermeier has clearly created *Ein Volksfeind* with the consideration on its reception in different countries, which can be also illustrated by the nuances he sometimes adds to the body of the production before performing it in a new place. However, the specific nature of theatre suggests the opportunity of unexpected audience's reactions, which are hard to predict and even harder to explain. The latter is impossible to do only within the discipline of theatre studies. For instance, the theory of crowd behaviour explained by Elias Canetti has provided me with interesting insights on collective reactions. Its application goes beyond participatory theatre; for instance, Canetti (1978) suggests using the strength of the applause as a clue to the extent to which the spectators have become a crowd in traditional theatre. Therefore, researching factors that determine audience's behaviour in theatre is one of the areas that need extensive research, which can be conducted only in combination with sociology and behaviour psychology.

The next point that is important to highlight is that audience and performers are connected by the shared space, their bodily co-presence, and the tension and energy created thereby. In other words, both actors and spectators are responsible for the way the performance develops. For instance, the failed attempt of role reversal during *Ein Volksfeind* in Oslo is the result of the inequality of power distribution within the discussion scene. On the contrary, both in Berlin and in Moscow the power play between the spectators and the actors led to the creation of a community of equals among them, which is a necessary condition for speaking about the politics of a performance. Indeed, not every ritual is political

and not every acceptance of new role is an act of politics. However, it occurs on a community level, for instance, when a group of individual spectators united by their co-presence, energy exchange, and simultaneous perception of real and fictional places is concerned, on the condition that the creation of this community leads to the establishment of their altered statuses and, thereby, emancipation.

One act of politics sometimes leads to another, previously unknown and unexampled, as the Moscow performance has shown. Such instances are hard to study without the existence of precise tools and methods. The question of "politics" and political potential of the arts is highly relevant in contemporary society. However, it is far from being an easy one; its relation to a number of disciplines and fields complicates us from framing the concept and agreeing on its clear definition. A lack of shared terminology on the matter not only presents an obstacle to the analysis, but also makes it less accessible to other researchers and hinder the creation of mutual understanding on the matter. In order to come to a compromise, some concepts have to be redefined, and new concepts combining several notions from different fields have to be introduced. As Samuel A. Chambers claims, the "most significant choice of what to do with Rancière's radical definition of politics is to incorporate it into an already extant political theory or a broader conceptual framework." This thesis, for instance is my attempt of unite Rancière's ideas with the existing concepts and show their possible application in the field of theatre studies.

The field itself presents a number of challenges to its analysis. Even though its special nature allows us to determine the politics of a theatre work, the idea that we can only do it for a certain performance, namely the evening when we witnessed it, implies that our analysis is based not on material facts, but on our own impressions and experience as spectators. Although relying on memory and senses is less than common in the academic field, there exists no other way to conduct a performance analysis unless being a part of it. Moreover, the material artefacts that theatre possesses, such as playbills, costume sketches and set photos, can only be used as supporting materials, as the information withdrawn from them can not suffice to describe a performance. Even though critical reviews and audience's questioners often provide us with some examples of spectators' reactions, they fail to transmit individual feelings and body reactions. Thus, the peculiarities of performance also call for developing tools and methods of research specified for this discipline.

To face the above mentioned challenges, I used Herrmann's and Fischer-Lichter's works on theatre, Rancière's political theory, van Gennep's scheme of the rites of passage, and White's model of audience's behaviour in participatory theatre. However, it does not

imply that the use of these theories or their combination is the only proper way of looking at performance. This research is only a step in developing empirical and objective, to an extent one can speak of objectivity with regard to a theatre performance, method of analysing a single performance and determining whether it turned out to be political or not.

To sum up the given points, we need future research in the area of theatre studies, a research that will, on the one hand, consider the peculiarities of performance and traits distinguishing it from other works of art, and, on the other hand, combine this knowledge with the theories from another fields. I believe that multidisciplinary research can most contribute to our understanding of such notions as the spectator's behaviour, the politics of performance, and theatre's role and place in our society. Theatre has originated as a place of public meeting and community creation, however, its evolution lead to the introduction of new functions within the new socio-political reality. By suggesting that we should treat theatre as a place of repoliticization, Ostermeier urged to bring back the combination of political and aesthetical, to challenge existing theatre reality and conventions forming it, which we, researchers, should reflect on. Moreover, as he once claimed, theatre "könnte ein Ort sein, der durchaus eine reinigende Kraft besitzt"[74] (Ostermeier 2013, 9). It is also our task as theatre scholars to evaluate this power and establish clear and accessible ways of sharing it within our community.

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[74] Theater "could be a place that possesses purification power."

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